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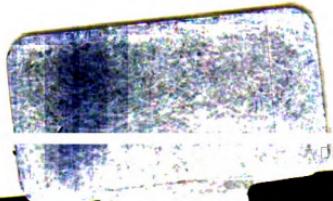
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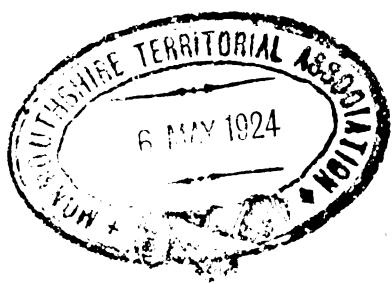
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SOMERSET YEOMANRY, VOLUNTEERS & TERRITORIALS, 1586 to 1923.



West Som. Yeomanry, 1586. North Som. Yeomanry, 1814. Som. Provisional Cavalry, 1798. North Som. Yeomanry, 1858. West Som. Yeomanry, 1858. Volunteer, 1586. Bath Volunteer, 1780. Volunteer, 1803. 3rd Bn. Somerset L.I., c. 1885. 10th Bn. Somerset L.I., 1908. Territorial, 1923.

**THE HISTORY  
OF  
Somerset Yeomanry, Volunteer  
and Territorial Units.**

**BY  
W. G. FISHER.**

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*DEDICATED*  
*TO*  
*ALL CITIZEN SOLDIERS,*  
*PAST, PRESENT AND TO BE.*



## PREFACE.

I wish to thank all my friends, and others interested in the Somerset Territorial Army, for their unstinted help and advice which have made the compilation of this History possible. I am particularly indebted to Major Kennedy, C.B., and Brig.-General H. C. Frith, C.B., for reading the typescript; their assistance in this way has made it possible to issue a book more accurate and more complete than would have been the case otherwise.

W. G. F.



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# THE HISTORY OF Somerset Yeomanry, Volunteer and Territorial Units.

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## INTRODUCTION.

THE Territorial of to-day is a worthy citizen endowed with a great virtue. His presence in the citizen army proves that he is gifted with forethought, that he is preparing for any danger in the hidden future that will require him to leave the plough, desk or counter and draw the sword against the aggressor. This forethought has not been instilled in him by that refinement of thought generally attributed to modern education. It has been handed down generation after generation from time immemorial. It was this thought for the future which banded into tribes the scattered families of primitive man and forms the foundation of our nationhood.

The present-day standing army dates from 1660. Before that time no man looked upon war as anything but a secondary consideration, sometimes very imminent, but more often shadowy and remote. He was chiefly concerned with the welfare of his cattle and the products of his land, but, nevertheless, like the Territorial of to-day, he exercised himself more or less in the use of weapons ; and, in Anglo-Saxon times, was always ready to rally round his overlord when the King summoned him to the Fyrd, or General Levy.\*

After the Norman Conquest, in 1066, the General Levy had a double role. It was a fighting force, and also a civil body on which the Sheriff could call when he needed assistance in arresting

\* All freemen between 15 and 60 years of age were liable for the General Levy, and it was one of the three main conditions under which they held their land, the other two being the maintenance of fortifications and the repairing of bridges. Hallam's *Constitutional History*.

criminals or suppressing riots. As a military body it was not liable to serve outside the Kingdom, and, except in case of invasion, not outside the county boundaries. The Army for operations in other countries was found, in Saxon times, by the Thenghood, and, after 1066, by means of the Feudal Levy.\*

This General Levy was a very unwieldy thing, embracing as it did "every man within the allegiance of the King." It is obvious that it could very rarely have been possible to call out every man capable of bearing arms—unless the cattle and horses were to go untended, the crops unharvested, and the mills to tumble in ruin—and so, in the time of Henry II. we find that a quota only was called out at once. About this time exemption from service could be purchased. It also became the practise to make the non-serving citizens of a county or town supply arms and victuals to those who served personally. This system, by which the cost of the General Levy was met, continued up to quite recent times, when counties were required to pay a part of the expenses of the Militia. The General Levy, after becoming known successively as "Musters" under "Commissions of Array" and "Trained Bands," developed into the "Militia," which disappeared in 1908 under the provisions of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, 1907.†

From this brief outline of the conditions of service in the General Levy, and from what follows, it will be seen how very similar were the conditions under which men *volunteered* to serve in the Volunteer Force and Territorial Army. Like the General Levy, they served without pay except when embodied, and they volunteered for the defence of the Kingdom only. These voluntary offers of service have been as ceaseless as the tides. On the approach of danger they reach the high-water mark, but when it is passed they begin to ebb. They are a good sign in any nation, but it would be better if they did not ebb quite so low.

The first English Volunteer Soldiers were probably recruited during the Wars of the Roses, when the rich and powerful barons, in addition to arming their retainers, hired any who were willing to fight. The greater part of the fighting was done by these Volunteers.

\* *Stubb's Constitutional History*, Grose's *Military Antiquities* and *Manual of Military Law*.

† Much useful information on this subject could be gathered by those interested in Grose's *Military Antiquities*, a good Constitutional History such as Stubb's or Hallam's, Scott's *British Army* and Rymer's *Foedera*.

In 1533 began Henry VIII.'s quarrel with the Pope, and war with any or all of the Roman Catholic countries was imminent from that time onwards. Recognising this, Henry resuscitated the General Levy, which had become overshadowed by the Feudal Levy and the irregular raising of troops during the Wars of the Roses. On August 25th, 1537, he granted a charter to the Guild of St. George in London (now represented by the Honourable Artillery Company), permitting them to encourage shooting with "long bowes, crossbowes and handgonnes," and to establish similar bodies throughout the country.\* If any such guilds were formed in Somerset all traces of them have disappeared. It is possible that they were not recognised as individual military bodies, and were governed by the Guild in London.

It is not long after this, however, that we meet with what are the first bodies of Volunteers raised in the County of Somerset of whom we have any definite record.

In 1567 the people of the Low Countries revolted against the oppression of the Spaniards. Their action roused the sympathies of the people of Protestant England, but Queen Elizabeth was not anxious to incur the immediate enmity of Spain, and it was not until 1573 that England openly supported the United Provinces.

The men of Queen Elizabeth's time are distinguished by the spirit of adventure which animated them. It is therefore not surprising that large bodies of men went over to aid the Dutch.

One of the first Somerset men to do so was Captain Thomas Hodges, of Wedmore. A brass plate in Wedmore Church commemorates him and bears the following proud and stirring epitaph :

"WOUNDED NOT VANQUISHT.

Sacred to the memorie of Captaine Thomas Hodges, In  
the County of Somerset, Esq.: who at the Siege of  
Antwerpe aboute 1583, with unconquerd courage wonne  
two Ensignes from the ENEMY, where receivng his last  
wound, he gave three legacys : his soule to his Lord Jesus ;  
his body to be lodgd in Flemish earth ; his heart to be sent  
to his dear wife in England.

Here lies his wounded heart, for whome  
One Kingdome was too small a roome ;  
Two Kingdoms therefore have thought good to part  
So stout a body and so brave a heart."†

\* See the *History of the Honourable Artillery Company*, by G. A. Raikes, 1878, and *Manual of Military Law*, p. 152.

† Copied from the original tablet in Wedmore Church.

Captain Hedges commanded a company in Colonel Morgan's Regiment, and died of wounds in the beginning of February, 1585, in the last months of the siege.\*

In July, 1585, after the capitulation of Antwerp, England's support assumed a more substantial form, and we undertook to supply the General States with 1,000 horse and 5,000 foot. These troops were Volunteers recruited chiefly by Captains who had some experience of war in the Low Countries, and the following extract from a List of "The names of such Capteins as have levied voluntarie men heare within the Realme in what Counties and what nombres," dated May, 1586, shows the units raised in Somerset :—

The (Lord) Audley in ye Countyes of Wiltes,						
Somerset and Dorset .. .. .. ..	300					
Alexander Dyer in ye Countye of Somerset ..	150†					

Although we know they were raised and went over to Holland, we know little of their activities there, for in the State Papers of the time they are embraced in the general term, "English soldiers." The system of naming bodies of troops territorially was not then appreciated.

We may, however, conclude that they shared the vicissitudes of others who gave up all to help in the fight for freedom. Many of their officers often went to great personal sacrifices in order to pay them, while others mulcted them of the paltry guilders the Netherland's Government could find for them. When their officers decamped, and left them stranded, they no doubt attached themselves to whichever officer would take them. And so, embittered by scurrilous treatment, they became soldiers of fortune, prepared to sell their swords to the highest bidder—when there was a bidder—

\* Letter from Colonel R. Morgan to "The Right Honourables my singular good Lordes the Lordes of Her Majesties most Hon'ble privie Councell." *State Papers, Flanders, Vol. I., No. 27.*

† *State Papers, Elizabeth, Vol. 189, No. 52.* Mr. Emanuel Green, in his *Somerset and the Armada*, mentions Captain Dyer's Company as being 250 strong. He has misread the badly formed figures; the tail of the 1 is carried on to the 5 and makes it look like 250. 150, however, is the number given in a letter in Lord Burleigh's own handwriting. This mention in Mr. Green's work suggests that the Company was raised in anticipation of the Armada, which was not the case. Alexander Dyer was doubtless related to Sir James Dyer, the eminent judge, of Wincanton, and to Sir Edward Dyer, the Elizabethan courtier and poet. Sir James, however, is believed never to have married, while Sir Edward died without issue.

and often careless whether it was wielded in the cause of right or wrong.

How many, we wonder, returned to the warmth of a Somerset welcome ; how many wandered the Netherlands in rags, often under suspicion as Spanish spies ; and in the end found nonentity in paupers' graves. Looking down the vista of the years that have passed, we wonder how many Somerset men have since passed over, and indeed shared, those graves.

During the Civil Wars (1642-49) military service was almost entirely voluntary until Cromwell formed his New Model. The Militia, one of the chief causes of controversy between Charles I. and Parliament, seems to have been divided in its allegiance, although it was the first military force Charles called upon. The irregular means adopted by both sides to raise men during this time do not come within the scope of this introduction.

The next Volunteers that may be noticed are the misguided Somerset men who took up such puny weapons as pitchforks and reaping hooks in the hopeless cause of the Duke of Monmouth (1685). But, misguided though they might have been, the zeal they displayed and their great bravery in fighting well-armed and well-trained soldiers in the stubbornly contested battle of Sedgemoor, cannot but rouse a thrill of pride in our hearts. It is a pride that is enhanced by the knowledge that they were our ancestors.

The refusal of the Highland supporters of the Old Pretender to march beyond the Border (1715) may have rendered it unnecessary to form the local military associations which were raised in 1745, when the young Pretender, the handsome and popular Charles Stuart, invaded England in his father's cause. These Associations consisted of Volunteers armed for the defence of the towns and districts and committees of affluent citizens, including ladies, who raised money to provide arms and clothing for the Volunteers.\*

A Company of Volunteers was raised in Bath, and it was maintained for rather more than a year by Ralph Allen, the postal reformer. He armed and clothed the company out of his own pocket, and provided a drill ground at a cost of £2,000. It was commanded by his clerk of the works, Richard Jones.†

\* *Gentleman's Magazine, 1745.*

† *Life and Times of Ralph Allen*, by R. E. M. Peach.

A Volunteer Association was also formed by the Earl Poulett, then Lord Lieutenant of the County, among his tenants and servants at Hinton St. George.

When the rebellion commenced the people of Taunton offered to raise 1,000 men. But when asked shortly after what men and money they had raised, they sent the Lord Lieutenant "a paper kite with a long tail of names, a thing to amuse the mob, and that hangs but by a pack of thread." In most places in Somerset the people became inactive and even disaffected through the raising of the Militia, a force which had almost died out.\*

In 1757 the Militia was reorganised and quotas were fixed by Parliament for each county. Somerset was required to find 840 privates. This Militia Act was very unpopular, and led to riots in various parts of the country. There appears to have been none in Somerset. The Act was amended in 1758, and parishes were permitted to offer volunteers in the place of men selected by ballot. From this time on many parishes furnished all Volunteers, and, subsequently, they were permitted to pay bounties to such Volunteers out of the parish funds. These bounties ranged from anything up to £10, but during the Napoleonic Wars, when all suitable men were in either the Regular Army, Yeomanry, Volunteers, or Militia, they were considerably increased, and as much as £60 was paid for a voluntary recruit. If parishes could not find their quota for the Militia they were heavily fined, hence the high monetary "inducement" offered to Volunteers.

The American War of Independence broke out in 1775, and when France—having an axe to grind in the New World—declared war on England in 1778, the strength of the Militia was doubled, mainly by the enrolment of additional Volunteers. In 1780 Officers Commanding Militia Regiments were urged to form separate companies of Volunteers, posting to them those already serving.

In the year 1778 there was formed in Bath a Committee for raising a fund to encourage men to join voluntarily the military and naval forces for service in America. A bounty of Three Guineas was given to any volunteer recruit for the Regular Army, and a similar amount was given to an able seaman entering the Navy. Any landsman or ordinary seaman joining the Navy received Thirty Shillings. Other Committees may have been formed in Somerset,

\* *State Papers, Dom. Geo. II.*

but this instance is mentioned because this soliciting of Volunteers for the Regular Army and Navy was somewhat unique, since military and naval press-gangs were still used for filling the ranks of the standing forces.

In July, 1779, it was proposed, apparently at the instigation of Sir John Miller, to form in Bath a Squadron of Light Dragoons, consisting of one hundred privates. The unit was to be called "The Bath Rangers," and was intended for service within the United Kingdom. Sir John Miller offered to find the horses at his own expense, and the Government undertook to provide clothing, arms, accoutrements, and subsistence for men and horses. A subscription was started to provide bounties for the men who enlisted.

About the middle of August, however, the unit was disbanded for some reason which is not apparent. On the date of its disbandment fifty-four men had joined, and others from Taunton, Sherborne, Bradford, and Trowbridge had offered their services. The Bath chair-men had also decided to supply thirty of the youngest of their members. Most of the enlisted men joined the Regular Army.

On the 16th August, 1779, the Military Association of Young Gentlemen and Tradesmen of Bath performed their exercises for the first time in the Tennis Court. This place became their Headquarters. Their intention was to form themselves into a corps and call themselves "The Bath Independents"; but when their offer of service was accepted, towards the end of August, they styled themselves the "Royal Bath Volunteers."

Their drills were carried out every morning between 5 and 8 a.m., during which time recruits were also enrolled. Evidently, they were much earlier risers than the present-day youths.

The Royal Bath Volunteers selected Major Arthur Molesworth, formerly of the 14th Regiment of Light Dragoons, to command them. His Commission as Major Commandant was signed on 13th October, 1779, and the other officers, appointed at the same time, were Robert Savage and William Putland (Lieutenants) and Richard Trigg (Ensign).

The uniform of the Unit consisted of a coat of superfine scarlet faced with blue, white waistcoat and white breeches, gilt buttons, a plain hat resembling the type in which Napoleon is so often portrayed, with a gold button and loop.\*

\* *Bath Chronicle*, 1779.

The unit appears to have had little encouragement in Bath, and it is significant that when the Mayor applied in November, 1780, for military aid in connection with the Gordon Riots\*, he made no mention of the Volunteers. They had probably ceased to exist.

The Volunteer Units which we have noticed do not resemble the Volunteer bodies we shall now deal with. The Volunteers of Elizabethan days were raised for service overseas, and all other subsequent Volunteers, with the exception of those of 1745 and the Bath Volunteers of 1779, formed part of and were subject to the conditions of the Militia. A Volunteer in the Militia had to complete the normal three years' service, he was clothed and armed at the expense of his parish, he was liable for immediate service within the Kingdom at any time, and he was liable to imprisonment if he failed to attend the exercises that were ordered. For the first failure to attend drill he was fined a small sum, for the second he was sentenced to sit in the stocks, and for continuing to be absent he was liable to imprisonment.

The Volunteers formed in 1794 have no parallel in the previous military history of England, and their formation marked the beginning of a new era in the defensive organisation of this country. They formed a separate force, a force with which our enemies have had to reckon on more than one occasion. At times their existence has been a rather feeble one, but they have won through. They have had many detractors, but the arguments and sneers have fallen to the ground when the hour of trial came round.

The following pages will give an account of these Volunteers. We will follow the fortunes of the few scattered units formed in 1794 to their partial disbandment in 1801, and will describe the armed multitude which arose in 1803, stirred by the threats of Napoleon. And so on, to the attenuated force represented by the Yeomanry until it again assumed robust proportions in 1859, called into being by the shiftiness of Napoleon's descendant. There will be outlined its share in the South African War, its re-organisation into the Territorial Force, until, finally, it wins its spurs and is baptised in the sanctifying blood of Armageddon.

\* Letters in the Home Office Files at the Public Record Office. It is not generally known that the Gordon Riots spread to the provincial towns. In the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1780, p. 295, it is stated that on Sunday, 11th June, 1780, "something like martial law was proclaimed at Bath." John Butler, of Bath, was hanged at Wells for his connection with the rioting.

## PART I. (1794-1859).

### CHAPTER I.

#### EARLY VOLUNTEER LEGISLATION.

**W**HICH is the first Act of Parliament which authorised the raising of distinct bodies of Volunteers? 34 Geo. III., cap. 31, seems to be generally regarded as the first. This Act was passed 17th April, 1794, but on March 28th, the same year, a short Act was passed (34 Geo. III., cap. 16) for "Augmenting the Militia."

The purpose of the latter was to authorise the raising of Volunteer Companies and to give the King the option of increasing the Militia with Volunteers if necessary. It made legal the acceptance of offers of Artillery Volunteers, Volunteer Cavalry, and Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry.\*

The substance of the Act was that "any Person or Persons, properly qualified according to Laws now in Force, shall offer to His Majesty's Lieutenant of any county to raise one or more Company or Companies, to be added to the Regiment of any County or Riding, it shall likewise be lawful for His Majesty's Lieutenant to accept such offers and to appoint such officers accordingly; and that it shall likewise be lawful for His Majesty's Lieutenant to accept and cause to be inrolled any number of Volunteers, not exceeding such number as His Majesty may, from Time to Time, during the Continuance of this Act, think proper to authorise, to be added as Privates to the Establishment of such Regiment or Battalion as aforesaid, and to give to such Officers raising Companies or Privates as aforesaid, such Temporary Rank not above the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel as His Majesty shall direct."

It also said that the Volunteers should be "entitled to the same allowance of Bounty, Subsistance Money, Arms and Clothing as the rest of His Majesty's Militia Forces in this Kingdom." Those serving in the Militia were to serve for the same period as the

\* See Pitt's Speech in House of Commons, March 6th, 1794.

Militia, or until such earlier time as their services were no longer required. Parishes could, if desired, pay £10 to each Volunteer.\*

34 Geo. III., cap. 31,† as a matter of fact, did not relate to the *raising* of Volunteers, but provided for disciplinary and other measures *after* they were enrolled. It laid down that when Volunteers were called upon to "act within the County or the adjacent Counties for the suppression of Riots or Tumults, shall in such cases be entitled to receive Pay in such Manner, and at such rates, as the Officers and Soldiers of His Majesty's Regular Forces do now receive; and shall, during the Time of their being continued in such service and so receiving Pay as above, be subject to Military Discipline as the Rest of His Majesty's Regular and Militia Troops." At such times a Volunteer could not, however, be punished by a Court Martial unless it consisted entirely of Volunteer Officers.

The Act further provided for billeting Volunteers as in the case of the Regular Army and Militia; and the delivery of their "Arms, Accoutrements and Cloathing" on discharge. The Penalty for non-delivery was £10. In the event of disablement whilst on actual service, Officers were entitled to half-pay; Non-Commissioned Officers and men to the "Benefit of Chelsea Hospital," and widows a pension for life. All serving Volunteers were exempted from serving in the Militia, and were not required to find a substitute. This privilege was secured on the production of an affidavit, signed by the Volunteer's Commanding Officer at the Deputy-Lieutenant's Sub-Division Meeting. When they were discharged from the Volunteers they were regarded as having served a term of Militia service, and took their turn for the next ballot.

On the 18th October, 1796, Mr. William Pitt, then Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, outlined in the House of Commons his scheme for a further augmentation of the Forces for Defence. Briefly, he proposed to introduce a bill‡ to authorise the raising of an additional 15,000 Volunteers for the Army and Navy,

\* We doubt if this was done, as Volunteers raised under this Act would not relieve parishes of the usual Militia quota. The £10 was paid to avoid the Government fine imposed for not producing the required number.

† This Act is practically a transcript of one passed for the same purpose in 1782.

‡ It was, in fact, divided into three chapters, namely, 37 Geo. III., c.c. 6, 23, and 139. The portion relating to the irregular or provisional cavalry did not pass through the House of Lords until 30th December.

a supplementary levy for the Militia of 60,000\*, and a body of 20,000 Irregular Cavalry. The first two were passed with little opposition, but the levy for the irregular or provisional cavalry, as it was afterwards called, met with an intense and long-maintained opposition.

Mr. Pitt said the number of horses kept for purposes of pleasure amounted to 200,000 in England and Wales. Some gentlemen kept ten and some twenty, and he proposed that those keeping ten should find one horseman, those keeping twenty two, and so on. Those who had only one horse were to be balloted, and those chosen were to find a horse and horseman.† This was a reversion to the old feudal system and the system of raising the Militia which existed prior to 1757. Had Pitt not possessed a powerful group of supporters, it is doubtful if such an Act would have been introduced into the House of Commons.

The Deputy-Lieutenants of Somerset do not appear to have taken any steps to raise the provisional cavalry until the end of 1797.

In 1798, when the danger of invasion first became very imminent there was comparatively little legislation of importance. On March 29th there was introduced in the House of Commons a bill "to enable His Majesty more effectually to provide for the defence and security of the Kingdom." Among other things, it required that the Lord-Lieutenants of Counties should submit returns regularly of the numbers eligible for service between the ages of 15 and 60 years. A clause also authorised the publishing of the names of those who would not serve in the Volunteers and their exhibition on Church doors. Here we find the first instance of the Government encouraging enrolment in the Volunteers by a mild form of moral persuasion. Under this Act the Provisional Cavalry was embodied.‡

On June 23rd, 1798, a short but important Act was passed which completely altered the status of the Provisional Cavalry. As a matter of fact, the original Act was a complete failure. It was most unpopular throughout the country, and every endeavour was made to evade its provisions, false returns were made out by those affected by the Act, and many frauds were committed. The Pro-

\* This supplementary Militia was merged into the General Militia by Act of 39 Geo. III., c. 106.

† *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1797, Pt. 1, p. 40.

‡ The King's Message to House of Lords, 20th April, 1798.

visional Cavalry Bill was therefore modified by a clause "that, if three-fourths of any sub-division of a County should enrol themselves to serve voluntarily, during the war, within that military district, the whole sub-division should be exempted from the operation of the Act." Another amendment provided "that, if any of the provisional cavalry shall be willing to attach themselves to fencible corps,\* horse or foot, they may be at liberty to do so, not exceeding twenty men to each company or troop." Subsequently, the Provisional Cavalry was converted into Fencible Cavalry, and the personnel were invited to transfer voluntarily.

The only other Act of importance which was introduced in 1798 was one to exempt from service in the Militia certain Volunteers not covered by the previous Acts. In the debate on this Act Mr. Dundas, Secretary of State for War, said, "The force of the Kingdom consisted of 140,000 men, infantry and cavalry; out of that force 35,000 had been sent out of the country, but in consequence of the zeal of Volunteer corps, the force of the Kingdom amounted now to 240,000 men." A clause was added providing that the exemption should not extend to Volunteers who failed to attend exercises regularly.

The big changes which took place in the organisation of the Volunteers during 1798, and the considerable augmentation of the Force, were effected by means of instructions issued by the Secretary of State for War, and did not need additional legislation.

After the Peace of Amiens (25th March, 1802) an Act (42 Geo. III., c. 66) was passed to continue the services of certain Volunteer Corps, but it related mainly to Yeomanry. The Infantry Corps were only continued in the very large towns. The conditions under which their services were accepted may be summarised as follows :—

- (1) Services of every person to be purely voluntary.
- (2) Corps continued only at the request of members.
- (3) No pay allowed.
- (4) Every Yeoman Cavalryman to serve seven days in the year; every Infantryman fourteen days.

\* The word "Fencible" is an abbreviated form of "Defencible." Fencible units were first formed in Scotland, where they took the place of Militia. They are distinguished from Volunteer units by the fact that they were called up for service as soon as trained. They were given precedence over Militia units in 1798.

(5) They were to bind themselves on their honour to attend the call of the Lord-Lieutenants or Sheriffs of Counties to repress any riots or tumults, and to resist any attacks on the coast.

The Treaty of Amiens gave Europe only a short pause from warfare, and early in March, 1803, war again became inevitable between England and France.

About the middle of July the General Defence Bill (43 Geo. III., c. 96) was introduced into the House of Commons, making it compulsory for every man between 17 and 55 years of age to train himself to the use of arms. From this it became known as the "Levee en Masse Act."

It's most remarkable provision was the classification of the male population into four classes. They were :—

- (1) All men of the age of 17 and under 30, unmarried and having no child living under the age of 10.
- (2) All men of the age of 30 and under 50, unmarried and having no child living under the age of 10.
- (3) All men of the age of 17 and under 30, who were married and had not more than two children living under the age of 10.
- (4) All men not included in Classes (1), (2) and (3).

Lists of the people coming under these headings were compiled by Constables of hundreds who submitted them to the Lord-Lieutenant through Deputy-Lieutenants of Sub-divisions. On the Sunday before they were sent to the Deputy-Lieutenants the lists were affixed to the Church door, together with a notice of the date, place and time of hearing appeals.

The clause most important to the Volunteer Force, however, was the one which exempted a county or parish from compulsory training provided it raised Volunteers "to such proportion as shall appear satisfactory to His Majesty . . . . not being less than three-fourths of the whole number of the First Class." The proportion which appeared satisfactory to His Majesty was fixed at six times the Militia quota.

Later in 1803 another Act (43 Geo. III., c. 120) was passed, dealing chiefly with the exemptions to which Volunteers were entitled, and amending the "Levee en Masse Act." These

exemptions became very complicated from time to time through the introduction of new legislation. In September, 1803, the West Somerset Yeomanry had a book printed to explain the Volunteer Acts relating to exemptions, and it was issued to every Yeoman in the Unit.

The chief exemption, of course, was that relating to the Militia ballot. But owing to omissions in new Acts affecting the Militia and its auxiliaries, the Supplementary Militia\* and the Army of Reserve†, fresh legislation was necessary. Mounted officers and men were also exempted from the horse tax for one horse, and all ranks were exempted from the hair-powder duty‡. The hair-powder duty came into force on 8th May, 1795. All who wished to powder their hair had to obtain a licence costing one guinea per annum. All ranks of and below the rank of subaltern in the Army, Fencibles and Militia, and all officers, non-commissioned officers and privates in the Volunteers, including Yeomanry, were exempt.

The most important Act relating to the Yeomanry and Volunteers was passed in 1804 (44 Geo. III., c. 54). Under it the power of appointing officers was vested in the King; candidates were nominated by Lord-Lieutenants of Counties, who relied upon the recommendations of Commanding Officers. The rules of the Corps were to be forwarded to His Majesty for approval, and were not to be regarded as valid unless his approbation was declared within twenty-eight days. The conditions of exemption from the Army of Reserve and Militia were modified, and the privileges were forfeited if a Volunteer failed to make himself "effective." In order to become effective an Infantry Volunteer had to do twenty-four trainings and a Cavalryman fourteen trainings every year. A Volunteer could resign on giving due notice to his Commanding Officer, but he first had to deliver up his arms and accoutrements,

\* Formed in 1796.

† Formed in 1803.

‡ It may not be considered out of place to mention here that when introducing this tax in the House of Commons Mr. Pitt said that there were about 50,000 hairdressers. It was considered that they used on an average one pound of flour per day each, making 18,250,000 lbs. a year. This would be sufficient to make 5,314,284 quartern loaves, "at the usual allowance of 3½ lbs. for a quartern loaf." At least, four times as many people dressed their own hair or had it dressed by non-professional dressers. Altogether, it was estimated that the value of flour used for hairdressing amounted to something like £2,300,000 p.a. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1795, p. 757.

and pay any fines or other sums due from him under the Rules of the Corps. The sum of £2 2s. was to be paid each Volunteer on being called out to repulse an invasion ; this was intended to cover the value of underclothing and necessaries a Volunteer might take with him at the time. The Yeomanry were liable for service in any part of Great Britain in the event of invasion or an enemy appearing off the coast, and the Infantry were liable to serve within the military district. All the more important clauses in previous Acts were consolidated in this one, and it remained the Act under which Volunteers could be raised down to 1863 ;\* for the Yeomanry it continued down to 1901,† and was not completely repealed until 1921.‡

\* It was repealed so far as it related to Volunteers by 26 & 27 Vic., c. 65.

† The Act of 1901 (1 Edw. VII., c. 14) did not repeal the portions relating to the raising of Yeomanry, but altered the status of the force, making it more akin to the Militia.

‡ Territorial Army and Militia Act, 1921 (11 & 12 Geo. V., c. 37).

## CHAPTER II.

## A REVIEW OF THE PERIOD 1794-1802.

**O**N the 29th March, 1794, the Grand Jury, assembled at Taunton, considered certain plans for the Defence of the Kingdom, which were communicated to them by Earl Poulett,\* the Lord-Lieutenant† of the County. They resolved unanimously "that we are and shall be at all times ready to stand forward in the protection of this Kingdom, and that the Sheriff be requested to call an early meeting, to obtain the sense of the county, as to what Plan will be best, in the present state of public affairs, for this county to adopt, in order to carry the measure into execution."‡

According to a local paper of 1794,§ there was already one Volunteer Unit in existence in Somerset. The Loyal Somerton Volunteers were said to have been formed as early as the beginning of February, 1794, by George Donisthorpe, Esq. This may have

\* John, 4th Earl Poulett, born 7th April, 1756, married 11th June, 1782, to Miss Pocock, daughter of Admiral Sir George Pocock, K.C.B. Succeeded 1788. He was Knight of the Thistle, Lord of the Bedchamber (apptd. 1795), Lord-Lieutenant of Somerset, Colonel of the 1st Somerset Militia, Recorder of Bridgwater. He died 14th January, 1819. (Family Records, by kind permission of Lady Poulett.)

† The appointment of Lord-Lieutenant is of great antiquity. Camden quotes the following passage by Ingulphus of Crowland: "So he (Alfred the Great) first divided England into Counties. . . . Moreover, he made the Counties to be divided into so many Centuries or Hundreds, and Tithings. . . The Governors of Provinces were before that called Lieutenants (Vicedomi); But this office he divided into two, Judges and Sheriffs." Later Camden says: "In each of these counties, in troublous times especially, there is (1586) appointed a Deputy under the King, by the name of Lieutenant." (Camden's *Britannia* clxvii. and clxviii.). Under the Militia Act of 1662 (14 Chas. III., c. 3) the Lieutenancy of a County became a statutory appointment, and was chiefly connected with the Militia. (*Manual of Mil. Law*, p. 171, Chap. IX., s. 84.)

‡ Advertisement in *Western Flying Post*, 7th April, 1794, signed "John Strode, Foreman."

§ *Western Flying Post*, 9th June, 1794.

been a fact, but in the official lists issued by the War Office\* the Taunton Loyal Volunteers are given precedence over Somerton, and they show the officers of the former corps to have been appointed on 21st June, 1794, whereas George Donisthorpe's and his subalterns' commissions were dated 30th June, 1794.

The meeting called by the Sheriff, Charles Knatchbull, Esq., was held at the Swan Inn, Wells, on Wednesday, 9th April, 1794. The attendance included the "Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Free-holders and other opulent inhabitants of the county." The Sheriff presided.

The Government's plans were considered and whole-heartedly approved. Briefly, they related to the increasing of the Militia by Volunteer companies; the formation of Volunteer Companies in particular towns for local defence; the raising of troops of Fencible Cavalry and other bodies of cavalry consisting of gentlemen and yeomanry;† the enrolment of pioneers and the appointment of Volunteer Infantrymen to man batteries on the coast.

The Meeting at Wells also resolved to commence a subscription which was to be utilised in any way the County Committee thought fit. The County Committee was to consist of those who subscribed £50 and upwards. This was a loose way to constitute so important a body, as any number of disaffected persons, to whom it was worth while, could pay the required amount, dominate the Committee, and prevent any progress that might otherwise have been made. Several such incidents actually occurred during the 1745 rebellion. This danger, however, does not appear to have arisen, for the Committee, during the first year or two, formed the hub around which the Volunteer organisation in Somerset revolved.

The subscribers of £50 and upwards were: Charles Knatchbull, Earl Poulett, Sir J. Trevelyan, Henry Hippisley Coxe, H. Seymour,

\* "Officers of the Several Regiments and Corps of Fencible Cavalry or Gentlemen and Yeomanry and the Volunteer Companies, issued by the War Office, 28th July, 1794."

† The etymology of yeomanry should be considered here. It is derived from the Old Friesic *gaman*, *ga* village and *man*. In Chaucer's time the term appears to have been applied to retainers, he himself having been yeoman of the chamber to Edw. III. Henry V.'s Army at Agincourt was composed mainly of yeomen, who were the archers. These yeomen were small farmers, and the term is still applied to that class. It is from the fact that this class always supplied the archers, whose bows were made of yew, that some authorities derive the origin of the word.

John Slade, T. S. Joliffe, J. Lethbridge, J. F. Luttrell, M. Brickdale, Admiral Sawyer, John Ashford Sandford, W. G. Langton, J. Tyndale Warre, P. Sherston, H. Hobhouse, Wm. Provis, George Donisthorpe, S. Bailward, John Fisher, W. Helyar, N. Dalton, R. T. Combe, J. R. Collins, Wm. Hopkins, Corporation of Axbridge, J. Hanning, J. Tucker, James Coles, C. Hutchings, J. Somerville, Revd. Dr. Lovell, Jeffreys Allen, H. Whitmash, W. Wiltshire, John Wiltshire, S. Rodbard, S. Daniel, John Strode, Dean and Chapter of Wells, Thomas Horner, John Palmer, C. Bernard (of Jamaica), John Pigott, H. A. Martin, W. Davies, Corporation of Wells, John Band, Edward Lyne, William Dawson, The Bishop of Bath and Wells, E. Clarke, Sir T. Acland, Revd. J. Rogers, W. Turner, J. Whitmash, Abel Moysey, Sir Philip Hales, Lady Tynte, Lady H. Acland, Miss Acland, W. Dickenson, H. Strachey, C. Tudway, George Templar, C. Tayler, John Gore, Thomas Neate, James Ireland, William Speke, Mayor and Corporation of Bath, Sir Abraham Elton, Andrew Bain, Samuel Doddington, John Evered, Mrs. Goodford, Edward Pheilips, Thomas Bury, Sir Alexander Hood, Sir John Hugh Smyth, and Francis Milner Newton.\*

Messrs. William Provis and Matthew Brickdale were appointed Treasurers for receiving the subscriptions raised within the County ; and Messrs. Hoares & Co. were appointed to receive the contributions of Somerset people in London. Mr. W. Hyatt was appointed Secretary.† At all the meetings of the Committee of which we have any record Charles Knatchbull, Esq., was voted to the Chair.

The Committee's main duty was the distribution of the large sums that came pouring in to the Treasurers. The actual raising of units was left to individuals.

Within a week of the County Committee's first meeting recruiting had commenced in Bath for a regiment of Light Cavalry, which became known as the Somerset Fencible Cavalry. The moving spirit was John Strode, Esq., of 30, Marlborough Buildings, Bath, who became the Lieutenant-Colonel of the Regiment. The unit was to consist of six troops, and recruits immediately received the pay of a Dragoon soldier, and were provided with horses and accoutrements. They enlisted for the period of the war.

\* Compiled from the subscription lists published by the Committee in the local papers.

† *Western Flying Post, Bath Chronicle.*

As was the custom at that time, the officers purchased their commissions. The rates paid for commissions in the Somerset Fencible Cavalry were as follows, and the fund thus formed was sufficient to meet the initial expenses of the regiment :—

Colonel (Right Hon. Earl Poulett)	..	..	£1,000	0	0
Lt.-Col. (John Strode)	..	..	500	0	0
Major (John Burkeley Burland)	..	..	500	0	0
Captains each	..	..	300	0	0
Lieutenants ,,	..	..	100	0	0*

The officers received temporary rank only, and were not entitled to half-pay, unless disabled on actual service. The arms, accoutrements and clothing were furnished by the Government, but the levy money paid to the men was found by the officers. The horses were also found by them, but were paid for by the Government at a reasonable rate. That "reasonable rate" was probably about half their actual cost.

By the 12th May the Somerset Fencible Cavalry had almost reached its full strength.

On the 22nd of April a meeting was held in Taunton with the result that a Committee was appointed to form a Volunteer corps. William Kinglake, the father of A. W. Kinglake, the celebrated author of *Eothen*, was the Secretary. Any person residing within seven miles of the town was eligible for membership, subject to the approval of the Committee. Recruiting went on apace, and soon two hundred volunteers, formed into three companies, were on the muster rolls of the Taunton Corps of Loyal Volunteers.†

The Taunton Volunteers soon fell into the routine duties of civilian soldiers. Drills were held in the Assize Hall from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.: the First Company on Mondays, the Second Company on Wednesdays, and the Third Company on Fridays. A full-dress Church parade was held on the first Sunday in every month.

The Sergeants received 1s. for every drill which they attended, and soon after its inception a subscription was started in Taunton "to defray the loss incurred by inferior tradesmen by the time employed in military discipline."

\* *Bath Chronicle*.

† *Western Flying Post*.

The men's accoutrements were purchased from a grant of £420 made by the County Committee.

While the Fencible Cavalry and Taunton Volunteers were forming, Robert Stevens was busy in Castle Cary and district raising a troop of gentlemen and yeomanry cavalry. The members were to find their own horses, and no levy-money was to be paid. The arms and accoutrements were provided by the Government. They were to be exercised at times fixed by warrant from His Majesty the King, and were liable to be "embodied or called out of the county by the special direction of His Majesty, in case of actual appearance of invasion, and to be liable to be called upon by order from His Majesty, or by the Lord-Lieutenant, or Sheriff of the County, to act within the county, or in the adjacent counties, for the suppression of riots and tumults." When actually on service they were to be paid as cavalry.

At a meeting of the County Committee, held at the George Inn, Bridgwater, on 5th May, 1794, Robert Stevens produced a list of gentlemen and yeomen willing to serve in a troop under his command. The Committee accepted the offers of service, and advanced £200 to assist those members to purchase uniform, &c., who could not afford to do so out of their own pockets. This grant was increased to £600 on the 16th June, and later to £700, which became the initial grant made from the County Fund on the formation of subsequent troops. This grant was mainly used for provision of horse furniture, helmets, cloaks, and uniform.

Robert Stevens received a commission in the rank of Captain, and because his troop was the first to be raised in the County the County Committee ordered that it should be distinguished by having No. 1 on the buttons of the uniform. Subsequent troops were similarly distinguished according to the order in which their offers of service were accepted. Thus, the troop of gentlemen and yeomanry cavalry accepted by the County Committee on 16th June, which was raised in Taunton by John Hanning, Esq., had No. 2 on the buttons of the uniform.\*

In the first flush of patriotic enthusiasm there was little difficulty in raising the first few units. Moreover, the exemption from the Militia Ballot was as great an incentive to join as the desire to prepare against invasion. Service in the Militia was always a burden to

\* *Western Flying Post and Bath Chronicle.*

that indefinable class which embraced the tradesman, master-worker, professional man, clerk and farmer.

By the end of May, 1794, a company of volunteers had been formed in Wells under the command of Captain Peter Sherston. The other officers of the corps were Lieutenants Edward Tuson and Shuckburg How. Three more troops of Gentlemen and Yeomanry were also in course of formation by the end of June.

There were some, however, who approached the question of voluntary service with caution. In the beginning of May, 1794, John Southey Somerville (afterwards Lord Somerville, Peerage of Scotland) and Sir Philip Hales wrote to Lord Poulett suggesting that in view of the large extent of the county and the harm that would be done to agriculture if yeomen were called out for service outside the county area, it would facilitate the raising of troops of gentlemen and yeomanry if they were required to act within the county only. This limited service was accepted by the Government in a letter from Whitehall, dated 30th May, 1794, the reading of which suggests that the troops raised by Lord Somerville (at Milverton) and Sir Philip Hales (at Brymore, near Bridgwater) were the first in the Kingdom to be raised for local defence.\*

The corps at Milverton, consisting of two troops, was first known as the "Loyal Corps of Volunteer Cavalry." The first members, numbering more than one hundred, were enrolled on 25th July, 1794, and they formed the nucleus of the West Somerset Yeomanry, which were converted into Artillery in 1920.

The officers of the corps were, so far as it has been possible to trace : Major Lord Somerville, Captain Wade, Lieutenants Bellett and Gardiner, and Cornets Gregory and Durham.

Towards the end of 1796 a third troop, formed at Wellington, was added to the Corps. The officers of this troop were Captain W. A. Sanford, Lieut. John Lyddon and Cornet William Webber.†

In October, 1794, the "Loyal Somerset Regiment of Fencible Infantry" was raised in West Somerset, its headquarters being, apparently, in Taunton. The Colonel of the Regiment was William Frederick Forster, the Lieutenant-Colonel, Thomas Fownes Luttrell,

\* Order Book of the West Somerset Yeo., a copy of which is in the possession of Colonel W. Barrett, of Moredon, North Curry.

† Order Book of the West Som. Yeo., and official lists of officers published by the War Office.

and the Major, Hugh Antrobus. From the pay-lists of this unit in the Public Record Office, one may deduce that its activities were approximately as follows :

It was stationed at Taunton up to the end of August, and soon afterwards proceeded to Jersey for garrison duty. Service on England's outpost island was by no means so dull as one might imagine, and the Somerset Fencibles were no doubt ever on the alert to protect the island against the raids of French privateers.

In 1797 Ireland was seething with rebellion, and the Somerset Regiment of Fencible Infantry was ordered to Coleraine. Disembarking at Dublin, the Regiment marched to its station, a distance of nearly 100 miles, arriving there on the 15th July, 1797. When the rebellion was at its height the unit was doubtless moved from place to place in order to disperse the rebels, helping with other English Fencible Regiments to put down the risings of both Catholic and Presbyterian malcontents. They may also have helped to smash the French invasion of Mayo.

There is every reason to believe that the records of this unit's activities in Ireland were to be found in the Record Office at the Four Courts, Dublin. They are irrevocably lost, therefore, in consequence of the destruction of the Four Courts by the Irish rebels in 1921.

Towards the end of 1798 the Regiment was in Dublin. During 1799 it was stationed at Londonderry and Buncrana, and in February, 1800, we find it at Armagh.\*

The Fencible Cavalry do not appear to have done much service outside the South-Western Military District. At different times they were stationed at Taunton, Bridport, Wellington, Weymouth, and Barham Camp. At Sheffield, in February, 1799, the Regiment volunteered for service in Portugal, but the offer was not accepted.

While the young men of Somerset were offering personal service in the defence of England, those unfit for military duties were contributing their share in other ways. Within a week of the first meeting of the County Committee nearly £4,500 was subscribed. The clergy became collecting agents in their parishes, and through the energy they displayed the County Fund was considerably augmented.

\* Pay lists at the Public Record Office.

In the larger towns small committees were formed, and in this way £293 was collected in Bridgwater, £195 in Chard, £208 in Frome, £267 in Batheaston, to quote only a few. "Widows' mites" came in from Puxton (£1 19s.), Sutton Mallet (£1 5s.), Moorlinch (15s. 6d.), Hardington (6s.), and Lullington (5s.).

Those who could not serve personally served by substitute. That is to say, they paid all the expenses connected with the equipping and maintenance of a Volunteer. These substitutes were generally household servants.

In his Milverton Corps of Yeomanry Cavalry, Lord Somerville restricted this service by substitute to the following conditions :—

"They (the substitutes) must be men of good character and accustomed to ride. They must have a fixed residence in the County. Menial servants cannot, therefore, be accepted, as being liable to change situation. They must not be persons of such description as may probably be disposed to enlist in the Army, Navy, or Militia. These substitutes to be equipped in the same manner as those who serve themselves and under the same conditions."

Under these conditions John Weech, Thomas Gordon, Thomas Handford, John Carpenter, John Spurway, William Darch, James Withycombe, John Southwood, Thomas Harris, and J. Luttrell served by substitute in the Milverton Corps of Yeomanry. Long after an unfortunate accident had left him incapable of serving personally, Lord Somerville continued to serve by substitute in the unit he had created.\*

By the end of May, 1795, Somerset had raised a Regiment of Fencible Cavalry, another of Fencible Infantry, Troops of Yeomanry Cavalry at Castle Cary (No. 1 Troop, Captain R. Stevens), Taunton (No. 2 Troop, Captain John Hanning), North Perrott (No. 3 Troop, Captain Wm. Hoskyns), Yeovil (No. 4 Troop, Captain Samuel Daniel), Brymore (No. 5 Troop, Captain Sir Philip Hales).† Milverton (No. 6 Corps or Division, under Major John Southey Somerville),‡ Martock (No. 7 Troop, Captain Andrew Bain), and

\* Order Book of West Somerset Yeomanry.

† Although this troop appears to have been the third to be recognised it was numbered the fifth.

‡ The Milverton Yeomanry consisted of two troops, but both appear to have had the number 6 on their buttons.

Taunton (No. 8 Troop, Captain John Tyndale Warre). Companies of Infantry were in existence at Taunton (3 companies), Somerton (1 company), Bridgwater (2 companies), Langport (2 companies), and Wells (1 company).

In 1797, the Deputy-Lieutenants of Somerset were busy raising the Provisional Cavalry. In April they accepted tenders for supplying uniform from Messrs. Badcock, of Taunton, and complete horse furniture from Mr. Dighton, of London. All these things were to be paid for by the persons who were required by the Act to find the horses and men. The men chosen by ballot, however, received the following allowances, which practically covered the actual expense of providing the horse and man with saddlery and uniform :

	£	s.	d.
For the uniform	..	..	2 9 6
For the horse furniture and necessary bag	..	5	14 0

In addition they were allowed 2s. 6d. for each day the horses and men attended the musters, and 4s. per week for keeping and maintaining the horse prior to embodiment.

The Somerset Provisional Cavalry was first mustered in the different Sub-divisions during the months of March and April, 1798.

The years 1797 and 1798 were critical ones for England. There was a Naval mutiny at Spithead and another at the Nore ; revolutionary conspiracies were discovered. At heart, however, the people remained true. The great test came when the Executive Directory of France, on the 26th October, 1797, decreed : "There shall be assembled without delay, on the coasts of the ocean, an army which shall be called the Army of England. Citizen General Buonaparte is named commander-in-chief of that Army."\*

There were many reasons why France should conquer England. The Revolution had drained the national exchequer, and a war of conquest was commenced in order to fill it. But she found that the countries she brought beneath her yoke were in similar plight, and the harvest yielded only husks. Moreover, England was a thorn in her side ; at every point English troops bolstered up the weak continental armies, and every victory had to be dearly paid for with the blood of Frenchmen. And, what made her more bitter, she

\* *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1798.

saw in England the storehouse of all the gold of Europe. Thus, with cupidity and hatred as his incentives, Napoleon Bonaparte, the conqueror of Italy, then only 28 years of age, established his camps and his legions along the coast of France that faced England.

Throughout the crisis the people of England remained calm. They marvelled at the rumours that reached them of the mighty army Napoleon had assembled, the great rafts which, it was whispered, would transport it to England, 700 yards long and 350 yards broad, and eight stories high. They laughed when they were told that England was already divided up among the French soldiers.

The measures taken by the Government appear to have been woefully weak. It is true some arrangements were begun for fortifying the South coast ; the Provisional Cavalry and supplementary Militia were called out, the Volunteer Force was enlarged, and a voluntary subscription was started to meet the expense of repelling the invasion. But no arrangements were made for evacuating the civilian population from possible battle areas, the transportation of the children, the sick and the maimed, or the feeding of refugees. The Volunteers were told where they should march when the enemy appeared, but they were to be fed by the people en route. A poor prospect when the people would be panic-stricken and probably seeking safety farther inland. The Commissary-General for the Southern District of England published a book on what should be done if the enemy came, but he called it *Thoughts on a French Invasion*. The people of England did not want thoughts, they wanted strict and lucid orders as to their conduct. They realised the gravity of the situation, and were ready to obey.

On the 22nd February, 1797, three French frigates attacked Barnstaple, and the North Devon Volunteers were called out. The enemy ships, however, drew off, but the following day a French force of more than 1,000 was landed at Fishguard. They were all captured without bloodshed, but the people of Somerset had reason to feel that war and all its horrors were very near.

It was our Navy, not our military preparations, which made Napoleon mark time during that spring of 1798. Delay should be avoided when golden apples are to be gathered, and Napoleon's army became impatient as the days and the weeks went by. The Colossus had been raised on a pedestal of clay, and time soon made

it crumble. Recognising that a restless army would menace their own safety, the Directory approved the Egyptian Expedition, which Napoleon had long had in mind, and the great Army of England was hurried off to the East.\*

In Somerset the increasing of the Volunteer Force was pursued with great vigour. Infantry companies and troops of cavalry were raised in every town and large village in the County, and soon the County Volunteer Force was quadrupled. In the more thickly populated districts Volunteer Associations sprang up modelled on those of 1745.

The activity of the time can best be judged by a study of the list of units, which appears later.

Unfortunately, the County Committee formed in 1794 had died out during 1796, and there was no central body to co-ordinate the efforts of individuals. The Lord-Lieutenant was busy with the Militia. The Government received so many offers of service that it did not trouble about a definite or uniform organisation of units. The Lord-Lieutenants were informed that offers of service from local Associations would be accepted even when they comprised the defence of towns only, "or within a few miles thereof"; arms would be issued, "if required." Such was the directing force at a time when an invading Army was expected hourly !

It was the general rule that the Volunteer Associations were controlled by non-serving persons. Take, for instance, the Bath Association, which was formed on the 26th April, 1798. The Financial Committee, which was really an Executive Committee, consisted of one-half enrolled persons and the other half of non-serving subscribers. The subscribers might have included ladies, and the enrolled members of the Committee were elected every six months, not by serving men, but by a majority of non-serving subscribers †.

The only attempts at sensible organisation were the amalgamation of the Brymore and Langport troops of Yeomanry with the Milverton Corps, and the neighbouring, newly-raised troops with the Castle Cary Troop. These amalgamated units were called respectively the West and East Somerset Regiments of Gentlemen

\* *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1798.

† *Bath Chronicle*, 1798.

and Yeomanry Cavalry.\* Major Lord Somerville became the Colonel of the former, and Captain Robert Stevens the first Colonel of the latter.†

One Volunteer Association, formed at this time, is claimed to have a present-day connection, and we should therefore give some brief particulars of the circumstances which brought it into being.

On the 2nd May, 1798, the inhabitants of Frome held a meeting for the purpose of forming a Military Association for the defence of the town. It was decided to raise one troop of Cavalry and one company of Infantry, subject to a condition that it should not be required to march more than 10 miles from the town. Thomas Horner, Esq., J.P., was asked to take the appointment of Colonel Commandant of the Association, but he does not appear to have accepted it. The troop of Cavalry was commanded by James Anthony Wickham, and from it the North Somerset Yeomanry claims its origin. It was, however, disbanded on the 2nd June, 1802, and was reformed in three troops in August, 1803.‡

In 1798 Sea Fencibles were raised for the first time. Their main duty was to keep a look-out on the coasts for enemy vessels. Recruited from among sea-faring men, they came under the administration of the Admiralty, but generally speaking, they were organised on military lines. The Sea Fencibles raised among the pilots and inhabitants of Pill in June, 1798, carried colours, and had a drum and fife band like any Volunteer Infantry Company. There were other Sea Fencibles at Minehead, Watchet and Bridgwater.

During 1799 the Somerset Provisional Cavalry were re-organised into the 2nd Somerset Regiment of Fencible Cavalry, and on the 1st April, 1800, it was disbanded. The men received a gratuity of £1 1s. on disbandment, but the majority of them probably joined the Regular Army, thereby receiving a much larger bounty. The "King's Shilling" in those days was placed at a very high value; the Volunteer recruits joining the Fencible Cavalry received a bounty of £6 6s. and sometimes £8 8s., while the recruiter's reward was £1 1s. per head.§ In Somerset to-day a Territorial recruiter

\* "Gentlemen and" in the title began to drop out about this time.

† Order Book of West Somerset Yeomanry, and official lists published by the War Office.

‡ *History of North Somerset Yeomanry and Bath Chronicle*, 3rd June, 1802.

§ Pay List of Captain Faugoin's troop, in the possession of Mr. Henry Symonds, F.S.A., of Taunton.

receives 2s. per recruit, but in most counties no recruiting reward whatever is paid. For many years after the disbandment of their unit the officers of the 2nd Somerset Regiment of Fencible Cavalry met annually at the Swan Inn, Wells.

The Somerset Yeomanry and Volunteers contributed large sums to the Voluntary Subscriptions for which the Government appealed in 1798, and which augmented the national exchequer to the extent of £1,000,000. Among others, the two troops at Milverton subscribed £150, the Taunton Loyal Volunteers £370, the Yeovil Troop of Yeomanry £600, and the Castle Cary Troop £210. Other sums were contributed from time to time. Lord Poulett contributed £1,000 a year over and above all taxes, and the inhabitants of Bath subscribed more than £15,000 ! \*

Peace between England and France was secured in 1801 by the Treaty of Amiens, the preliminaries of which were signed on the 1st October. The Volunteer Force was no longer needed, and steps were taken to disband it. The Government, however, did not wish to dispense with all the Yeomanry units, and those that wished to continue their services in time of peace were invited to do so. The West Somerset Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry agreed to the conditions of peace-time service at a meeting held at Taunton on the 20th October, and their offer was temporarily accepted in a letter from Lord Hobart, the Secretary of State for War, to Lord Somerville, dated 31st October, 1801.† The unit was not definitely accepted for service in time of peace until January, 1803.

Apparently, the only other unit whose offer of service in time of peace was accepted was the East Somerset Regiment of Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry. In a letter to Lord Poulett, dated 24th July, 1802, the Secretary of State for War said : " It is not His Majesty's intention at this time to avail himself of the offers of any Infantry Corps within the County of Somerset."

The units thus accepted received from the Government a capitation grant of £2 per annum per man enrolled, to assist in the provision of horse appointments and uniform. Each troop of not less than forty rank and file received £60 per annum to meet contingent expenses.

\* *Western Flying Post* and *Bath Chronicle*, 1798, 1799.

† Order Book of West Somerset Yeomanry.

Approximately the same ceremony was followed by the various units in carrying out their disbandiment. The men paraded in their uniforms, the Commanding Officer read to them the votes of thanks to the Army and Navy passed by both Houses of Parliament, and they were then ordered to lay down their muskets or sabres. They then marched to Church to give thanks for the blessings of peace, and, if they possessed colours, they were laid to rest there in the same manner as the knights of old hung up their armour in the Churches when they had no further use for it. After the Church parade they would repair to one of the principal hotels, and there sit down to a dinner provided by their late officers. Roast beef and strong beer were the chief items on the bill of fare, and with boisterous good comradeship expressed on every hand it is no wonder that the day ended, as it did at Langport, in a procession round the town with the erstwhile C.O. carried in a chair at its head.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE PERIOD 1803-1859.

THE question of War in 1803 was centred chiefly in Malta. The tenth clause of the Treaty of Amiens stipulated that this island should be handed over by Great Britain to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and that its independence should be guaranteed and protected by Great Britain, France, Austria, Russia, Spain, and Prussia. Of these countries, however, only Prussia, besides Great Britain and France—the signatories to the treaty—accepted the guarantee. To complicate matters further, a disintegration of the Order of St. John set in about this time, mainly through various national influences and the appropriation of Sardinian provinces by France. It was, therefore, practically impossible to get a Grand Master elected to whom the island could be handed over.

Other things happened which helped to widen the breach which had always existed between this country and France. The French did not carry out their obligations under the treaty in regard to commerce, and her Commercial Agents, or Consuls, in British ports were looked upon with suspicion. Some were even discovered to have received instructions to make soundings of the harbours and maps of the district to which they were appointed. Then a French Army was kept in Holland contrary to the Batavian treaty, and the treaty of Luneville was defied when Napoleon ordered the invasion of Switzerland. The Swiss people appealed to England, but England was told she had no right to interfere in anything which was outside the scope of the Treaty of Amiens. This rap on the knuckles was taken very meekly, and growing bolder, Napoleon demanded the evacuation of Malta.

It was time for England to take a firm stand ; France had not carried out her undertakings, and Great Britain refused to give up the island, the occupation of which by the French would have affected seriously our influence in the Near East. War was declared in May, 1803, and Napoleon vowed he would gladly sacrifice 100,000 men in an invasion of England.

French troops were marched into Dunkirk, Calais and Havre, but the main camp was assembled at Boulogne.\*

It was the intention of the Government to meet this danger with the same measures that were adopted in 1798, namely, to increase the Militia and encourage the formation of Volunteer Units. In Somerset, as in other counties, there was considerable hesitation in carrying out this programme, owing to the misunderstanding which arose concerning the provisions of the "Levee en Masse" Act. The rumour was circulated, and was believed by even influential and intelligent people, that no matter how many joined the Volunteers the conditions regarding compulsory training would be enforced.

The Government's proposals for forming Volunteers were made known as early as the 31st March, but, owing to the above misunderstanding, practically no progress was made until the middle of July. Thus nearly four valuable months were wasted.

When it was made clear that a county or district would be exempted from the "Levee en Masse" Act when the Volunteer strength had reached six times the Militia quota, the rapidity with which units were formed was little short of phenomenal.† Like mushrooms, they sprang up in a single night. A meeting would be held one evening in a village or town ; if a hall was not available the usual place of assembly was the churchyard ; a local celebrity would make an inspiring speech, and the men present would divide, those wishing to join the cavalry would move to one side and those the infantry to the other side. Thus, in a rough but effective manner, there would be formed a strong nucleus of a Volunteer Association.

The great extent to which the Volunteer Movement dominated men's lives may be gathered from the fact that whereas in 1798 the Volunteers, including Fencibles and Yeomanry, did not exceed 90,000 in England, by the end of 1803 there were estimated to be 400,000 Volunteers under arms. In Somerset alone there were

\* *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1803.

† A Return presented to the House of Commons in pursuance of an order of 10th August, 1803, indicates that within about a month of that date there were 33 units existing with an aggregate strength of nearly 10,500 officers and other ranks.

probably not less than 20,000 men\* enrolled in Yeomanry or Volunteer Cavalry Corps or Infantry Companies—there were no Fencible Regiments raised after 1801. Considering this vast number with the fact that the male population of Somerset in 1801 was only 88,454, and there were 33,984 inhabited houses, one can truly say that Somerset was indeed an armed camp and every house an arsenal.

The following particulars indicate the great proportion of the population under arms at this time. At Monkton Combe “ all the young men with one assent volunteered their services ” ; at Ditcheat there were 143 Volunteers out of 175 men between 17 and 55 years of age ; at Corston there were 36 Volunteers out of 46 capable of actual service ; while Glastonbury claimed that every man between 17 and 55, numbering more than 200, were Volunteers.†

The people of England at this time were indeed magnificent in their individual patriotism,‡ and so popular were the Volunteers that no concert or theatre programme was complete if it did not include a song in praise of the Volunteer. The following song, specially written for the Bath Volunteers by “ Mr. Courtenay,” appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* of September 29th, 1803 :—

“ TO ARMS !”

OR, A CALL TO THE BATH VOLUNTEERS.

“ Ye Volunteers, hark to my song,  
And the spirit of Britons proclaim,  
To the standard of loyalty throng,  
And rival your ancestor’s fame.

*Chorus :*

“ Then wield the sword, and load the gun,  
And hurry to the field.  
We’ll soon compel the French to run—  
JOHN BULL will never yield.”

\* Mr. T. Serel, of Wells, used to say in one of his lectures that “ the armed Volunteer Force for Somersetshire, according to public returns made in 1803, exclusive of Regular Militia, amounted to the extraordinary number of 49,913 effective men, including 9,035 Yeomanry Cavalry ” (*MS. in Bristol Central Library*). The only “ public return ” we have discovered is the one presented to the House of Commons, which shows the strength to have been about 10,500 some time towards the end of 1803. Considering the number of males in the county in 1801, and allowing for men drafted into the Army of Reserve and the Militia, and those unfit for military service, or under 17 and over 55 years of age, we consider it would be impossible to raise nearly 50,000 men for the Volunteer Force.

† *Western Flying Post* and *Bath Chronicle*.

“ The tyrant may embark his host,  
 His slavish conscripts cheer ;  
 With blood we've often dy'd their coast,  
 But when were Frenchmen here ?

“ Then wield the sword, etc.

“ And dare they venture now to come,  
 Or touch the British shore ?  
 Awake the fife and beat the drum,  
 And bid the cannon roar.

“ Then wield the sword, etc.

“ Array'd in arms, rush to the foe,  
 Compel the slaves to fly ;  
 For British hearts with freedom glow—  
 We'll conquer or we'll die.

“ Then wield the sword, etc.

“ To rob and murder is their trade !  
 Such is the war they wage :  
 The matron and the beauteous maid  
 Are victims of their rage.

“ Then wield the sword, etc.

“ For all that's dear the Briton fights ;  
 His country calls to arms,  
 To guard her ancient glorious rights,  
 And beauty's sacred charms.

“ Then wield the sword, etc.

“ The hardy Swiss, on freedom's rock,  
 Defy'd the treacherous foe ;  
 Outnumber'd brav'd the battle's shock,  
 And dealt th' avenging blow.

“ Then wield the sword, etc.

“ Britain ! in arms a million shine,  
 Your fertile plains to shield,  
 To guard your daughters' blooming charms,  
 And win the bloody field.

“ Then wield the sword, etc.

“ While victory crowns our glorious toil,  
 Triumphantly we'll sing—  
 Our liberty and native soil,  
 And England's glorious King.

“ Then wield the sword,” etc.

When the number was reached which exempted the County from the compulsory provisions of the "Levee en Masse" Act, the Government accepted offers of service from units which undertook to claim no exemption privileges and to cause no expense to the Government. It was not to be expected that this ideal state would last long. Some of these supernumerary units, as they were called, struggled on for a year or two, but sooner or later they were forced to apply for financial assistance, which was readily granted by the Government. The only unit which appears to have maintained a state of financial independence throughout its existence was Sir John Jervis' Corps of Somerset Riflemen, and this was due entirely to the munificence of Sir John.\*

No man could join the Yeomanry at this time unless he provided horse, arms, clothing, and equipment at his own expense. If these conditions were carried out the Government undertook not to compel the yeoman to serve in any infantry regiment or corps.

A special feature of the Volunteer Force of this period was the high standard of organisation. Recognising the difficulty of introducing a uniform system of training among a lot of small companies situated in practically inaccessible villages, the Government encouraged the linking up of these into corps and regiments. In the case of the Yeomanry an Adjutant on full pay was allowed when the strength of the Regiment exceeded 300 privates, but a Sergt.-Major only for corps consisting of not less than three troops of 40 men each. An Adjutant and a Sergt.-Major were allowed for Infantry Regiments which exceeded 500 effective men; an Adjutant alone for those over 300 strong, but Infantry corps consisting of less than 300 and over 180 effective men were allowed only a Sergt.-Major.

As the qualification of an Adjutant was at least four year's service as a commissioned officer or Sergt.-Major in the Regular Army, Fencibles, embodied Militia, or East India Company's Service, it is little wonder that small companies, though they would have preferred to retain their individuality, were eager to amalgamate in order to avail themselves of the first-class experience which the Government offered. In the case of the Bridgwater Volunteer Infantry, Mr. John Crosse was appointed Adjutant, although he did not possess the qualification mentioned above. He had, however, served for a short time in the Somerset Provisional Cavalry.

\* *Home Office Letters at the Public Record Office.*

This, apparently, was the only exception in Somerset to a rule which was strictly adhered to.\*

The Sergt.-Majors were selected from among Volunteers, but they also must have served at least three years as N.C.O.'s in the Regulars, Fencibles, embodied Militia, or East India Company's Service.

There were also appointed at this time Inspecting Officers of Volunteers and Yeomanry. These officers were selected from the half-pay or Active Lists of the Regular Army. Their duties included the inspection of uniforms, arms and accoutrements ; the training, discipline and general welfare of units ; and they formed the channel of communication for monthly returns of strength and correspondence between units and Generals of Districts. With the exception of the training, these duties were previously vested in the Lord-Lieutenant, and it was obviously unreasonable to expect him to carry them out efficiently.

The value of these Inspecting Officers is beyond question. By continually inspecting units and keeping them up to a good standard of efficiency, they made what might have been little more than an armed rabble in the face of a disciplined invading army, a powerful, well trained and well disciplined Defence Force. Its strength during the time invasion was imminent has never since been equalled, and the same might be said of its efficiency. The inspecting officer for Somerset was Lieut.-Colonel Barnes, and for the District, Lieut.-General Simcoe, whose headquarters were at Exeter. The Yeomanry units were brigaded, and as regards these Colonel Barnes' next superior, apparently, was Brigadier-General Hewles (? Heales). Colonel Barnes' appointment was terminated on the 28th June, 1806, in consequence of the Government's decision to abolish, in the interests of economy, the appointments of Inspecting Officer and Brigadier-General in connection with the Yeomanry and Volunteers.† The decision would have been disastrous had not the Volunteer Force already begun to decline in strength and efficiency about this time.

Until the passing of the Volunteer Act of 1804, a controversy existed in the Volunteers on the question of the appointment of officers. When units were first raised the men in the ranks were

\* *War Office and Home Office Letters at Public Record Office.* Some of these letters were reproduced in the local papers.

† *Order Book of West Somerset Yeomanry.*

given the privilege of selecting their officers. They, therefore, thought that they had the right to nominate other officers to fill vacancies, and when the Lord-Lieutenants claimed this right there were several instances of units threatening to resign *en masse*. Feeling ran high in one or two Somerset units : the Bath Volunteers, for instance, objected to their Colonel appointing his own Adjutant, but it never reached the threatening stage. The matter was settled by a clause in the above Volunteer Act which definitely vested the right of nomination in the Lord-Lieutenant.

The following were the daily rates of pay when Volunteers were embodied for training, actual invasion or for the suppression of internal disturbances :—

RANK.	CAVALRY.	INFANTRY.
	£ s. d.	s. d.
Colonel ..	1 12 10	
Lieut.-Colonel ..	1 3 0	.. 9 5
Major ..	19 3	
Captain ..	14 7	.. 9 5
Lieutenant ..	9 0	.. 5 8
Cornet ..	8 0	.. —
Ensign ..	—	.. 4 8
Quartermaster ..	5 6	.. 5 0
Adjutant ..	10 0	.. 8 0
Surgeon ..	—	.. 10 0
Sergeant-Major ..	3 11 Includes 9d. for horse.	.. 1 6 and 2/6 per wk.
Sergeant ..	2 11 "	.. 1 6
Corporal ..	2 4½ "	.. 1 2
Trumpeter ..	2 4 "	.. —
Drummer ..	—	.. 1 0
Private ..	2 0 "	.. 1 0*

These rates were often supplemented from funds raised locally. The men of the West Somerset Yeomanry were paid as much as 3s. 4d. a day when embodied for training. In addition to their normal pay the non-commissioned ranks and privates received a Government allowance of 1d. a day in lieu of beer. The drill-sergeants, one per troop or company, were allowed full pay during disembodiment, and were attested as Regular soldiers in order to be subject at all times to military law. In September, 1803, this

\* *Home Office Letters, Western Flying Post, and Minute Book of Wells Infantry Volunteers, 1803.* The latter is among the Serle MSS. at Taunton Museum.

attestation was applied to the trumpeters and drummers, who received full pay. Before this the pay of an infantry drill-sergeant, not exceeding 2s. 6d. a day, could be claimed from the Parish, provided the Company concerned had a strength of at least 60 men.

Every Infantry Volunteer was paid 1s. for every exercise performed up to a maximum of twenty in a year. Drill performed on a Sunday did not count, nor did any week day if the Volunteer failed to attend the exercises on the preceding Sunday.

The Adjutants of both Yeomanry and Infantry Regiments were paid 6s. a day during disembodiment provided their units maintained the strength which qualified their appointments. The Yeomanry Adjutants received in addition 2s. a day for the maintenance of a horse. This allowance was also paid to the Adjutants of the Western Regiment of the Mendip Legion, the Bridgwater Regiment of Volunteer Infantry and the Eastern Regiment of the Mendip Legion, whose infantry companies were spread over very wide areas.\*

The activities of the Volunteers were not confined to making themselves efficient. The Somerton and Langport Volunteers, the Polden Hill and Bridgwater Regiments and the Taunton Rifle Corps offered to find escorts for French prisoners on their way from Plymouth to Stapleton Prison, Bristol. Fifteen rank and file of the Taunton Troop of Yeomanry offered to escort prisoners anywhere they might be required, and the Bath Volunteer Cavalry on one or two occasions provided escorts from Wells to Bristol.

In November, 1803, the Wells Volunteer Cavalry assembled one Saturday morning to escort 250 French prisoners to Stapleton Prison. In counting them over there were found to be only 245: five of them had escaped in the night. Immediately the alarm was sounded; parties were sent off in all directions, and the Wells Volunteer Infantry, though they had not yet received their arms, joined in the search. About noon a party of these Infantry Volunteers had reached a point on Mudgely Hill, above Wedmore, when they noticed something moving in a withy bed in the moor beneath. Surrounding it, they discovered the prisoners, whose swampy hiding place had made them wet, cold and wretchedly miserable. Returning to Wells in triumph, the Wells Infantry Volunteers ever after claimed that they were the first Volunteers in

\* *Home Office Letters at the Public Record Office.*

England to capture Frenchmen, and they vowed that if Napoleon brought over his Army they would capture many more.\*

In 1815, when it was rumoured that Napoleon would pass through Somerset on his way to London, the Taunton Troop of Yeomanry and the Bath Company of Volunteer Cavalry offered to find the necessary escorts.

After the Battle of Trafalgar (21st October, 1805) the Volunteer Force declined rapidly in numbers and efficiency. It was natural that a reaction should set in when the curtain was thus rung down on Napoleon's second and final attempt to invade England. For more than two years the people of this country had lived in a state of intense excitement. Anticipating an invading army any day, and at almost any hour, they were keyed up to the highest pitch. Nelson's great victory, which shattered Napoleon's schemes, had the effect of a clock spring suddenly unwound. The desire to become efficient in the use of arms vanished.

From this time onward the Volunteer Force only attracted men because it facilitated the evasion of Militia service. The Government pay, augmented considerably by local subscriptions, also helped in the degeneration of the Force. The shiftless, the street-corner boys, and the idlers seized upon it to augment the profits of their casual employment. It was like a ship that had been launched, gay with flags, newly painted, with polished brass-work scintillating in the sun, returning to port, its object accomplished, but ragged and dull with barnacles and other parasites clinging to it.

The Militia Ballot of 1807 would have had the effect of considerably increasing the Volunteer Force and reducing the number of available men liable for militia service. But Lord Castlereagh, then Secretary of State for War, was on his guard. Existing Yeomanry and Volunteer Units were told to consider their present strengths as their establishments, so that they could only enrol recruits to replace men who died or resigned.

In the following year the Local Militia, as distinct from the General Militia, was established throughout England, Scotland and Wales. It was to have been a balloted force, and was intended as a stout prop for holding up the rapidly weakening Defence Force made up of the Yeomanry and Volunteers. Its strength was dependent upon the number required, with Yeomanry and

\* *Bath Chronicle.*

Volunteers, to maintain the number which was six times the General Militia quota.

Existing Volunteer Units were invited to transfer to the Local Militia and accept the status of Militiamen. The majority of the Somerset units refused, but the 1st Batt. East Somerset Volunteer Infantry, Bridgwater Regiment of Volunteer Infantry, East and West Mendip Legions, Polden Hill Regiment, Somerton and Langport Volunteer Infantry, and the Yeovil Sub-Division Regiment of Volunteer Infantry appear to have transferred *en bloc*. The Local Militia of Somerset was divided into seven Regiments, the greater part of which must have consisted of Volunteers who had transferred.

On the 24th March, 1813, the Somerset Volunteer Force was disbanded, with the exception of the East and West Somerset Regiments of Yeomanry Cavalry, the Frome and East Mendip Volunteer Cavalry, and Captain Randolph's Company of the Bath Volunteer Regiment. This Rifle Company was increased to two companies in 1815, and became known as the Bath Volunteer Rifle Corps. Their services were dispensed with in 1826.\* The peace time services of the Nunney Rifle Company were also accepted on account of its being attached to the Frome and East Mendip Regiment.

The Frome Volunteer Cavalry, raised in 1803, was amalgamated with the East Mendip Regiment in 1804, under the Command of Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Strangways Horner. In March, 1814, Lord Poulett was informed that the Prince Regent approved the Frome and East Mendip Regiment being known in future as the "North Somerset Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry." In January, 1814, the Bath Troop of Volunteer Cavalry, whose services in time of peace were also accepted, was added to the North Somerset Yeomanry, but in April the same year it was separated and again became an independent troop.†

The East Somerset Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry was, with the exception of its Taunton Troop, disbanded in 1828.‡ The Taunton Troop soon afterwards became a Corps of three troops, and continued as an independent unit until it was disbanded on 10th November, 1843.§

\* *History of the North Somerset Yeomanry*, 1850.

† *Home Office Letters at Public Record Office*.

‡ *Taunton Courier*, 10th September, 1828.

§ *Home Office Letter*—“The Taunton Corps of Yeomanry Cavalry is released from its military engagements.”

The chief object for which the Yeomanry were trained during the remaining period covered by this chapter was the suppression of riots. Their activities in connection with these disturbances form the subject of a separate chapter.

The Reform agitation of 1830-31 brought about the raising of independent troops of Yeomanry at Ilminster, Martock and Mudford. After rendering excellent service in the riots of October, 1831, these units continued as independent troops until their disbandment, the Mudford and Martock Troops in 1838, and the Ilminster Troop on 22nd February, 1847.\*

Throughout this time the Yeomanry were select corps. Members were only accepted on the recommendation of one or more serving members, and in almost every case an entrance fee was paid. On 3rd March, 1803, Lord Poulett wrote to the Home Secretary : "It would be a most desirable measure in order to add respectability to so large a body of Yeomanry that all future vacancies of officers should be filled by Gentlemen of Property and Influence in the County." This, apparently, was a rule which was strictly observed at all times in Somerset.

The yearly assembly of these units for training became in time the social event of the season, and on the day they were inspected something in the nature of a general holiday was observed in the locality. So great was the crowd drawn by the spectacle of brilliant uniforms, and splendid horses with gay appointments, that the local Militia Company was generally mustered to prevent the spectators hindering the movements of the troops. In the case of the North Somerset Yeomanry this duty of "keeping the ground" was usually carried out by troops of the Wiltshire or Gloucestershire Yeomanry and Somerset troops returned the compliment.

In the Yeomanry we find the connecting link between the Volunteers of 1794, which we have taken as the definite beginning of the Defence Force now represented by the Territorial Army. At times the units' strengths were alarmingly low, but numbers were never lacking when trouble was afoot. The appointment of officers was at times treated in a very informal manner : their applications for commissions were approved by the Commanding Officer, but rarely went any further. In consequence, an officer often had no commission or other authority to warrant his command

\* *Home Office Letters.*

of troops. There are also instances where great difficulty was experienced in getting officers at all. A particular case is that of the Keynsham Troop of the North Somerset Yeomanry, which existed for many years without any officers. The members of the Troop degenerated so much in their discipline and general efficiency that they became known as "The Cossacks." An effort to reclaim them was made by Lieut.-Colonel Miles, but he lived too far away, and the Troop was disbanded in 1841. Most of the men, however, joined the Bedminster and other troops.\*

\* *History of the North Somerset Yeomanry, 1850.*

## CHAPTER IV.

## DISCIPLINE, EMERGENCY ORDERS, ETC.

**D**ISCIPLINE was maintained in the Yeomanry and Volunteers by inculcating in the men a high sense of personal obligation, by means of fines and by threat of dismissal.

It was rightly argued that as they were not impressed for military service it was a matter of honour to attend drills, obey rules and orders, and be ready to turn out at a moment's notice. In the Yeomanry especially the personal obligation was made the basis of the internal discipline. If a member failed to carry out his undertaking he was treated with the utmost ignominy. A meeting of the whole Troop would discuss his delinquencies, and the result would generally be a notice in the *Western Flying Post* or *Bath Chronicle* on the lines of the following :—\*

“ JOHN DYKE, OF WESTON, SOMERSET.

“ John Dyke, of Weston, yeoman, voluntarily enrolled in the First Troop of Somerset Yeomanry Cavalry, having positively refused to embody himself, although repeatedly summoned, in consequence of directions from the SHERIFF, that the said Troop should be held in readiness to aid the Civil Power, AND having denied also in the most direct manner the payment of Twenty Pounds, a penalty he had incurred, and which he had voluntarily promised under his hand to pay, if ever he refused to embody when called upon, either by order from His Majesty, The Lord-Lieutenant, or Sheriff of the County. A GENERAL Meeting of the Troop was this day held, when it was unanimously resolved, THAT as no obligation will bind that man, who can violate the strong and solemn tie of honour, the named JOHN DYKE BE EXPELLED, with every possible ignominy as a disgrace to the Corps, and to the Yeomanry. I do, therefore, in this public manner, as the greatest punishment a person with any degree of feeling can suffer, Expel the said JOHN DYKE. He is about 27 years of age,

\* Taken from the *Western Flying Post*, 6th July, 1795.

near 5 feet 10 inches high, stoops in his shoulders, black complexion, full face, large eyes, lank hair, and down-cast look.

“ (Signed) ROBERT STEVENS,

Captain.”

The fines which were imposed were manifold, and, considering the higher value of money compared with that of to-day, they were considerable. They differed according to the rules of the different corps, and were levied for absence from exercise (officers, 5s. to £1 1s.; other ranks, 1s. to 5s.), arriving late on parade (officers, 2s. 6d. to 10s.; other ranks, 6d. to 2s. 6d.), talking in the ranks (6d.), improperly dressed on parade (officers, 5s.; other ranks, 1s.), and dirty accoutrements (1s.).\*

The fines were imposed by Troop and Company Committees, consisting of officers and men. They were collected by the Trumpeter or Drummer, and were accounted for by the junior Cornet or Ensign. When a Volunteer had to perform a certain number of drills in order to become effective no exercises counted until all fines had been paid. The names of defaulters were read out at every parade immediately after roll-call.

Arms and equipment which were lost or damaged, other than by fair wear and tear, had to be paid for by the Volunteers responsible. Even the flints for the muskets were valued at the rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. each.

We find few punishments for drunkenness. The early nineteenth century was a time when manliness was judged by the depth of one's draught and the loudness and variety of one's oaths; and drunkenness was therefore greatly tolerated by all classes. A Sergeant of the West Somerset Yeomanry was suspended for three months for appearing on parade under the influence of liquor; a private, named Higgs, of the Bath Volunteers was dismissed for insulting his officer when drunk,† and a Captain Leach, of the 1st East Regiment of Somerset Volunteer Infantry, was relieved of his command, because, it was said, “On the 24th June, 1804, he

\* The fines were taken from the *West Somerset Yeomanry Order Book*, but similar impositions were made in all units. The amount of the fine would be the only difference.

† The men of Higg's Company threatened to resign unless he were reinstated. He afterwards apologised to his officer, Lieut. Norman, and the Regiment, and was re-enlisted. *Letters in Home Office files at Public Record Office.*

was so beastly drunk that he was left in a strawberry bed beside the road during a march."

A rather curious dismissal was that of Volunteer George Wilkinson, of the Bath Loyal Volunteers. He was discharged in 1804 for professing to be a United Irishman. He wrote and published a pamphlet, or "broadsheet," addressed "To the Officers of the Bath Loyal Volunteers," which was printed in Bath.\*

The arrangements made for meeting an invasion during the period 1794-1801 were most inadequate. The few orders issued showed a lack of understanding of the graver dangers attendant upon an enemy landing. There was some talk of the necessity of moving the civilian population out of the danger zone, but no arrangements appear to have been made. No one seemed to have the resource or energy to cope with such a task.

In 1798 there was a meeting of Deputy-Lieutenants and other Magistrates of Somerset, at which the military authorities were represented, to decide on suitable positions for erecting beacons, but it is not until 1803 that we find any existing. Beacons were then built on Castle Neroche, Borough Chapel, Glastonbury Tor, Beacon Hill, two miles from Shepton Mallet, on the road to Bristol, and there was another at Aller.† Though no mention of it has been found, Dunkery Beacon may also have been made ready to flash its warning glare to the people of Somerset and Wales, as it had done in centuries past. In addition to these beacons, signal posts were erected in 1803 on all the high hills of Somerset, and thus a chain of communication was maintained throughout the county.‡

The danger to health which would result from the calling out of men used to the comforts of home life to undergo the hardships of a campaign, was always apparent to the military authorities. In 1794 the Volunteers were required to have on hand two spare flannel shirts and one spare pair of stockings. These "necessaries," as they were called, in 1801 consisted of: 1 spare shirt, 1 pocket handkerchief, 2 pairs of stockings, 1 pair of shoes, a drill jacket, and shaving box, comb and razor. In 1803 there were added to this list a blanket, 1 pair of flannel drawers, a night cap, blacking

\* Letters in Home Office files at Public Record Office.

† Letters from Lord Poulett to Lord Porchester, dated 8th November, 1803.

‡ Western Flying Post, 25th July, 1803.

ball, and 2 brushes, and provisions to last three days. To assist him to provide these necessaries a Volunteer was to receive a grant of £2 2s. on being embodied for active service.

On the alarm being given Volunteers were required to repair, fully armed and accoutred, to their company or troop alarm posts, and the commanders were then to proceed with all speed to the rendezvous communicated beforehand. The units in the West part of Somerset had to meet at Wellington;\* the rendezvous of the other units we have not been able to discover.

From 1803 onwards Volunteers carried out the period of annual training, or "permanent duty," as it was called, under active service conditions. Drummers might be heard beating the "alarm" through the streets of the town in which the men were billeted at all hours of the day and night. Paroles or watchwords were set and were changed every day. The watchwords were usually the names of towns or places, and "Macclesfield," "Hampton Court," "Oakhampton," "Bridgwater," and "Basingstoke" were actually set by the West Somerset Yeomanry when on permanent duty in Taunton in September, 1804.†

Having dealt with the arrangements which related to the Volunteers, we will turn to those which affected the civilian population. The old men, the boys and the women were to do their part. They were told that as soon as the enemy landed the live stock within fifteen miles of the coast was to be driven inland to places indicated; steps were to be taken to destroy all standing crops, fruit trees, mills, ovens, hay, and provision stores, and the cows, sheep, pigs, and horses which could not be moved were also to be destroyed. The owners in every case were to be indemnified by the Government.

The names were registered of men not of military age who were prepared to take up arms on the landing of the enemy to act as guerillas, harassing the enemy whenever possible, and cutting off and destroying small detached parties. When the Somerset Volunteers had all been armed with muskets, Lord Poulett suggested to the Secretary of State for War that the pikes—which had been issued in the first instance—should be stored by Deputy-Lieutenants

\* *Letter from General Simcoe, Commanding S.W. District, dated September, 1803.*

† *West Somerset Yeomanry Order Book.*

and issued to the peasantry when the enemy landed. He was told “that Pikes can only be considered as useful under the absolute deficiency of Fire-arms, and I regret that the quality of those which have been issued bears a nearer resemblance to the Boarding Pikes of the Seaman than what were formerly of important use in the Land Service.”\*

A register was also kept of those who were willing to serve as pioneers for felling trees, building earthworks, etc., and to act as mounted guides.

In September, 1804, Lord Poulett reported that he had taken the necessary measures for a muster and inspection of all the wagons, carts, barges, and boats in the County of Somerset. These were earmarked for the purpose of conveying Volunteers and their equipment and stores, or for transporting the women, children and infirm from the danger zone. The Government even went so far as to provide every wagon with boards, which were to be used as seats. Those vehicles which were earmarked for a definite purpose were marked with the owner's name, “In the King's Service, No. —,” and the name of the parish in which the owner resided.† The vehicles within 15 miles of the coast which were not earmarked and could not be taken inland were to be destroyed.

From these particulars one can easily imagine the manner in which the French would have been received. The local Volunteers would have met them on the seashore as the Britons met the Romans. But the local forces would have been borne down by weight of numbers, and the French, pressing inland, would have been met with—Desolation. There would have been ruined wheat fields, orchards, and even devastated flower gardens; dead and putrefying cattle and horses would be lying about; there would have been the utter silence of the Land of the Dead; no moving thing would have met their gaze but thin, grey wisps of smoke rising from smouldering barns and mills. And in the night Death would have gone abroad, the British guerillas would have marked down the solitary outposts, leaving a message for visiting patrols that England was England still, and dared a foreign foe to tread its holy land without paying tribute in blood.

\* Letters in the Home Office files at the Public Record Office.

† The tail-board of one of these wagons is to be found in the Arthur Hall collection in the Museum at Taunton. It is marked “Arthur Hall, King's Service, No. 6, Woolminstone.”

## CHAPTER V.

## MEDALS, TROPHIES AND COLOURS.

**I**T was the usual thing in the early days of the Volunteer Force to encourage military efficiency by the award of medals. This was approved by the higher authorities, but Volunteers were not permitted to wear them on their uniforms. The medals were provided either by local Patrons, Members of Parliament, Officers Commanding units, or from Regimental Funds. They were usually of silver, sometimes oval, but more often round, and the design on the obverse as a rule depicted a Volunteer in uniform. On the reverse were recorded the Volunteer's name and the particular form of military exercise in which he excelled.

The following units, among others, issued these medals : The Langport Volunteers (1807) ; the Bath Association (1798) ; Frome and East Mendip Volunteer Cavalry (1805) ; North Somerset Yeomanry (1814) ; Taunton Loyal Volunteers (1798) ; and West Somerset Yeomanry (1820 and other years). The dates are those recorded on medals which are actually extant.

The West Somerset Yeomanry awarded every year a medal to the best swordsman, and another to the best carbine shot.\* They appear to have been first awarded during the Colonelcy of Lord Porchester.

When the Bath Volunteers were reformed in 1803 medals were not awarded ; but John Palmer, Esq., M.P. for Bath, presented a handsome Silver Cup to be shot for annually. The conditions were that the competitors were "to use regimental Muskets and to shoot at a mark 100 yards' distant."† Walter Long, Esq., also presented

\* It is curious that the awards of these medals were not recorded in the Order Book. They were usually announced in the *Taunton Courier*.

† The longest range at which a musket was fired was usually 150 yards, and there was a considerable interval between the firing of each shot. Yet, in the time of Henry VIII., more than 250 years before, the English archers could shoot 12 arrows in a minute, and rarely missed the target at 250 yards, despite their rapidity !

Twenty Guineas for the four best marksmen every year, the awards being Ten Guineas to the best shot, Five Guineas to the second best, Three Guineas to the third, and Two Guineas to the fourth.

In 1805 Mr. Palmer withdrew his single cup and presented eleven Challenge Cups to be awarded annually to the best shot in each Company. One of these cups was recently presented to the 4th Batt. Somerset L.I. The cup bears the following inscription :

“ This cup, presented by John Palmer, Esq., Member for the City of Bath, to excite and reward by this liberality the attention of the Bath Volunteers, was won by William Smart, private of the Lt. Company, by the best single shot at the target on Claverton Down, July, 1805.”

To which has been added :—

“ Presented (together with a similar antique cup) by W. E. Mallett, Rainbow Road, Bath, to the Officers of the 4th Batt. Somerset Light Infantry, to commemorate the gallant way in which the Battalion volunteered and proceeded on foreign service on the outbreak of the Great War, 1914.”

Mr. Long increased his annual contribution to permit Two Guineas to be presented to the second best shot in each Company.\*

The popular target at this time was an effigy of Napoleon with a star on his breast. The marksmen were those who could “ touch Boney’s star.”

In these days, when colours are never taken in battle, the layman cannot easily understand the reverence which prompted a soldier to give his life in defence of a square of embroidered silk. Understanding would not be possible without the knowledge that in its colours a Regiment’s honour and all its traditions are symbolised. A Regiment without colours is a Regiment in disgrace. It was to prevent such disgrace that Ensign Thomas, at Albuera, in 1811, accepted death rather than surrender the Ensign he carried. It was because of what it symbolised that Lieutenant Melvill wrapped the Queen’s Colour of the 24th Regiment around his body, and he and Lieutenant Coghill broke through the ring of Zulu spears at Isandlwana, only to fall on the banks of the Buffalo River. It was, in fact, this incident which moved the authorities to decide that

\* Mainwaring’s *Annals of Bath*, 1800-1835, published at Bath, 1838. In the annuals is a list of the first winners of the cups.

colours should no longer be taken into battle. The lives given in their defence were too precious.

It was fitting that the Volunteers should have their emblems of honour. It was also fitting that while the men gathered in their strength, the women should inspire them by weaving the banners round which they could rally. In every case of which we have record, the colours of Somerset Volunteer units were presented by women, and usually were the gifts of women.

On the 6th August, 1794, the Somerset Fencible Cavalry were presented at Taunton with three stands of colours, which were the gift of the County Committee. After the presentation the standards were taken to St. Mary's Church to be consecrated. In the evening the event was celebrated by a dinner in the Market House.\*

Apparently the ladies were anxious that the Taunton Volunteers should not be lacking in the visible signs of honour, for Lady Poulett offered them a stand of colours, and a similar offer was made by the ladies of Taunton. Both offers were accepted. The colours were presented on the Parade, at Taunton, on the 1st January, 1795. Lady Poulett's colours, presented by herself, were received by Lieutenant Clitsome, while the colours of the ladies of Taunton were presented by Mrs. Blundell, Lieutenant Pinchard receiving them. The Volunteers on parade then formed a circle round their colours, while they were consecrated by the Rev. Mr. Clapp.†

In the following month the Dowager Countess of Chatham asked the Langport Volunteers to accept a pair of colours "as a mark of her Ladyship's esteem of their loyal and spirited conduct."‡

About this time Lady Poulett also presented standards to the 3rd (North Perrott) and 4th (Yeovil) Troops. They were about eighteen inches square, of scarlet silk and fringed. They bore the arms of the Poulett family, [sable, three swords, their points meeting in base argent, hilted or], blent with the Pocock arms, [checky argent and gules, a lion guardant or]. Above the arms appeared, "Somerset Yeomanry Cavalry," and below was the Poulett motto,

\* *Western Flying Post*, 11th August, 1794.

† *Western Flying Post*, 6th August, 1795.

‡ *Western Flying Post*, 16th February, 1795.

“Gardez la Foy.” They were numbered three and four respectively. These flags are to-day at Hinton House.

It was not until the 4th September, 1795, that the Bridgwater Volunteers were presented with their colours, the ceremony being carried out by Lady Poulett. Her Ladyship led a procession of ladies, who escorted the colours from the Town Hall to the Cornhill where the Volunteers were drawn up.\* How vividly this brings to mind the procession of the Maids of Taunton a little over one hundred years before, when they presented colours to Monmouth’s rebel army at Taunton!

The West Somerset Regiment of Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry was presented with standards in 1798 by Miss Somerville. The Brymore, Milverton and Wellington Troops paraded on Brendown Hill on the 1st October, 1798, to receive them from the donor. “The Gentlemen who composed the colour guard, each kissing the standard, swore that nothing but death should ever compel them to quit or forsake it.” After the ceremony the men “were regaled by their Rt. Hon. Colonel, in the true English style, with beef and strong beer.”†

The Bath Volunteer Infantry had colours, but we have no record of the donor. They were deposited in the Guildhall, Bath, on the 12th May, 1802, when the Volunteers were disbanded. The standard of the Bath Volunteer Cavalry was the gift of Mr. Wilmet, of Lansdowne Grove. On the disbandment of the troop in June, 1802, it was deposited in Bath Abbey, “with much impressive ceremony and solemnity, there to be preserved till the shouts of war shall again grate harsh thunder on the public ear, and call our vigilant citizens once more to military duty.”‡

The local newspapers of 1803, our only source of information about colours, give us little that is of interest. The Yeovil Sub-Division Regiment received a pair of colours from Mrs. Fane, the wife of their Colonel Commandant. They bore the arms of the Fane family (? azure, three right-hand gauntlets with backs affrontee, or) and the motto, “If God be with us, who shall be against us?”§

\* *Bath Chronicle*, 10th September, 1795.

† *Bath Chronicle*, 18th October, 1798.

‡ *Bath Chronicle*, 13th May and 17th June, 1802.

§ *Western Flying Post*, 30th January, 1804.

In 1805 the Bath Forum Regiment of Volunteer Infantry was presented with colours by Mrs. Stephens, the wife of the Colonel. The colours were the gift of the Baroness Bath.\*

There is no doubt that all the Volunteer Corps and Regiments raised in 1803 possessed colours. Every Volunteer would feel that the equipment of his unit was incomplete were they omitted. The influence which raised the soul above the common things of life would be gone, and the regiment would be as empty as a church without its altar.

Happily, the colours of Somerset Volunteer units were not baptised in the blood of their worshippers. They carried out their mission in peaceful surroundings ; no smoke of battle tainted their brilliant hues ; no enemy's hand defiled their purity. Proudly they waved over Somerset hills and dales, symbols of honour and a duty fulfilled.

\* Mainwaring's *Annals of Bath*, 1800-1834.

## CHAPTER VI.

## UNIFORMS, ARMS, ETC.

**W**E enter upon this study of the Yeomanry and Volunteer uniforms at a time when a gradual change was taking place in men's costume. It was a change in favour of that cleanliness and simplicity which were emphasized in the fashions set by Beau Brummel, and which are handed down to the present time. The men of that time no longer wanted the gaudiness of the period of Geo. II., or the ridiculous wigs of the Macaroni *Beaux*, or the extravagant stripes of the *Zebras*. The hat was made to be worn ; the *Chapeau bras*, a gaudy, useless thing carried under the arm, disappeared ; the voluminous skirts of the frock coat were reduced and cut back into a tail-coat.

These changes are reflected in the military uniforms of the time. The loose-fitting frock-coat of the middle eighteenth century, the fronts of which were buttoned back when on the march, had been replaced in 1794 by a close fitting tail-coat, which was cut away from the front to show the waistcoat. It was held together by the cross-belts, and was open at the throat to give room for the ruffles of the cravat. The edge of the coat was richly braided, as was also the high collar. The nether garments were breeches, usually white, and black cloth gaiters, which buttoned to the knee and covered the instep. The black cockade of the House of Hanover was worn in the hat at first, and usually held in place a red and white feather.\*

The Dragoon uniform in 1794 was a blue, short-skirted jacket, trimmed with white braid ; white leather breeches ; helmet of black leather and fur, with a red and white feather ; and half boots. This would be approximately the uniform of the Somerset Fencible Cavalry and the Somerset Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry. In 1797 the coats of the Yeomanry were altered and cut into jackets, with short tail pieces.†

\* Fairholt's *Costume in England* and Calthorp's *English Costume*.

† West Somerset Yeomanry *Order Book*.

The Volunteer Movement at this time perpetuated the unclean practice of powdering the hair in consequence of the exemption of Volunteers from the Hair Powder Duty. Volunteers were required at all times to appear on parade with the hair powdered, and in some units it was the rule that every member should trim and tie his hair in the same way.\*

With the expansion of the Volunteers in 1798, the uniforms assumed a more gaudy appearance. The scarlet coat was often decorated lavishly with gold braid. Gold wings appeared on the shoulders and gold rosettes embellished the coat-tails. The black stock or neck-cloth appeared, but the frills of the cravat were fixed to the shirt. The Portsmouth Volunteers wore so grand a uniform that they were known as the "Golden Goldfinches."

This rich decoration of uniforms was very unwise, for the cost of providing them often prevented many useful men from joining. This was recognised generally, and in Somerset every endeavour was made to adopt a simple, plain uniform, the cost of which would not make too great a demand on the public subscriptions which, as a rule, provided it, or the pockets of those who undertook to find their own.

The sensible uniform of the Bath Volunteers of 1798 seems to have been designed with this in view. It consisted of a deep blue coat, with blue lapels, red collar and open cuffs; white kersey-mere waistcoat; blue pantaloons; half gaiters of black cloth; round hat and black velvet stock.†

The Frome Selwood Infantry adopted a similar uniform, the only differences being a feather in the hat and red edgings to the pantaloons. The Combe St. Nicholas Volunteers had scarlet jackets faced with white, blue pantaloons with scarlet seams. It is said that they wore "helmets of leather surmounted by a bearskin," but this was an unusual head-dress for Infantry men at this time.

The Frome Selwood Cavalry wore a deep blue jacket with chain wings on the shoulders; buff collars; buff breeches; rose button military boots; helmet; and black velvet stock. The undress jacket was of the same colour, but without the wings.‡

\* *Rules of Wells Volunteer Infantry*, among the Serel MSS. at the Taunton Museum.

† *Bath Chronicle*, 28th April, 1798.

‡ *History of North Somerset Yeomanry*, 1850.

The uniform of the Provisional Cavalry was "green turned up with red."

When the Volunteers were revived in 1803, a Committee of Somerset Deputy-Lieutenants decided that the uniform for the Volunteer cavalry and infantry should be scarlet faced with black.

This regulation, however, did not prevent some of the uniforms being rather unnecessarily decorated across the breast and down the seams with silver braid.

The Frome Selwood Cavalry in 1803 wore a scarlet jacket without tails, faced with black at cuffs and collar; silver lace braiding across the breast with a false pocket braided; white kerseymere breeches; black military boots with fixed spurs; short gloves; and an old artillery driver's helmet with a white feather.\*

The West Somerset Yeomanry uniform consisted of a scarlet jacket with facings between yellow and white; gloves of the same colour as the facings; leather breeches as near the colour of the facings as possible, inclining to white, with regimental buttons at the knee; high top boots; red and white feather in helmet; and black stock.†

In 1803 both the Cavalry and the Infantry jacket was buttoned up to the neck, and the open cuffs had also disappeared. But the Volunteer beau was not to be deprived of his ruffles. The lace edging on his shirt cuffs would appear below the cuffs of his jacket; the blackness of his silk stock—arranged without apparent order around the neck—would be relieved by the top of a white cravat showing above; his gaiters would often be padded to enhance his calves.

Space does not permit us to enter into more details of the uniforms of this period. Generally speaking, the scarlet jacket with black facings was universally worn, the Cavalry having white breeches and the Infantry blue pantaloons. Nor can we follow the changes which took place in the uniforms of the North and West Somerset Regiments of Yeomanry Cavalry during the period 1814 to 1859. To deal adequately with the subject the space of a small volume would be necessary.‡

\* *History of North Somerset Yeomanry, 1850.*

† *West Somerset Yeomanry Order Book.*

‡ Some interesting paintings of Somerset uniforms by Mr. Stansell, of Bath, are in the Taunton Museum, having been purchased by Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society.

We have still to deal with the arms which were issued, and the horse appointments of the mounted units.

It was intended in 1794 to issue firelocks to only one third of the Volunteer Infantry, the remainder being armed with pikes, eight feet long; but actually every man was armed with a firelock and bayonet. The only exceptions were the Sergeants, who were armed with halberts. Each of the Somerset troops of Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry received twelve carbines; fifty-four pistols; fifty-four waistbelts; fifty-four cartridge boxes; fifty-four swords ("scymetars"); fifty-four sword belts; and one trumpet and string.\*

In 1803 all kinds of firearms were pressed into the hands of the Volunteers, who were at first armed only with short pikes; blunderbusses, horse pistols, or anything that would fire a bullet were loaned to the Volunteers by the public. Gradually, however, these antiquated firearms and "pig prodders," as the pikes were sometimes called, were replaced by the long flintlock musket, known familiarly as "Brown Bess." Its weight, with the 17-inch bayonet, was 11 lbs. 4 ozs. The calibre of the musket was .753 inch. But the bullet's calibre was .68 inch, and the weight was 14½ bullets to the pound. Three flints were allowed for every sixty rounds of ammunition. The Sergeants were still armed with pikes only.

The Yeomanry arms were not changed until 1820, when the short carbine was replaced by the Elliott's long carbine and bayonet; twelve per troop being issued as before. In 1850 the long carbine and pistols were recalled, and every member of the Yeomanry was armed with a "short Victoria percussion carbine." The straight sword had also at this time replaced the curved sabre which was first issued.

The horse appointments in 1794 were very plain. The leather was blackened, and the bridle chains were covered with black leather. There was very little brass on the bridle, and what there was seems rarely to have been polished. The dinginess of the appointments were, however, relieved by goatskin housings, and bearskin sometimes covered the pistol holsters.

In 1803 things were brightened a little. The chains in the curb reins were uncovered and plated, and a white head rein was intro-

\* *Ordnance Warrants, Military Order Book, Vol. 141 (1794-1796), Public Record Office.*

duced. The housings were still of goatskin, but only the officers' holsters were covered with bearskin. The cloak was rolled 22 inches wide, and carried on a pad behind the saddle.

No horse was accepted in the Yeomanry unless it was fourteen hands and upwards, and each was to be well trimmed "in his heels, mane and tail."

A blue cloth shabraque was introduced about 1830, and in time it became decorated with white lace and gold braid. Shortly afterwards the West Somerset Yeomanry added a blue cloth case fixed to the back of the saddle to hold the cloak. At each end of the case the letters "W.S.Y." were embroidered in gold.\*

In 1850 the horse appointments of the North Somerset Yeomanry were : "Cossack saddle ; crupper and breastplate ; black sheepskin ; blue cloth shabraque, with the corners ornamented with white lace ; bent bit and bridle ; night halter and chain ; bidpoons (? bridloons) secured to night halter ; all brown leather and brass bosses."†

In fact, at this time the horses were almost as gaily dressed as the men.

\* *West Somerset Yeomanry Order Book.*

† *History of North Somerset Yeomanry, 1850.*

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE YEOMANRY AND RIOTS, ETC.

THE chief difference between the Yeomanry and Volunteer Cavalry, next to the enrolment of a particular class in the former, was that the Yeomanry units were "liable to be called upon by order from His Majesty, or by the Lord-Lieutenant or Sheriff of the County, to act within the County or in the adjacent Counties, for the suppression of riots or tumults." The Volunteer Cavalry and Infantry were, as a rule, liable to be called out for local defence in the event of invasion only, according to the conditions under which they accepted service.

In the *History of the North Somerset Yeomanry* (1850) it is said that the Regiment was called out seven times to suppress riots, and individual troops aided the civil power on not less than sixty-four occasions. Often they were called out when there was not the slightest need; but as the members usually lived some distance apart there was always some delay in assembling a troop. The local magistrates were therefore forced to call on the Yeomanry to be in readiness as soon as the slightest cause for alarm made its appearance.

The early appearance of the Yeomanry did not always have a good effect, especially when industrial workers assembled to make known their grievances. The latter began gradually to look upon the Yeomanry, consisting as it did of farmers employing labour at 6s. and 7s. a week, as a body particularly opposed to the improvement of wage conditions in the collieries and factories, since this would, and did, have the effect of attracting the agricultural labourer from the land. Therefore, the appearance of the Yeomanry often added fuel to smouldering fires, the passions of men who conceived themselves to be oppressed would burst into flame. Stones would be thrown: windows would be broken. Then the Yeomanry would parade the town dispersing, with the flat of their sabres, even the smallest assembly of men. But generally, a few days would see tranquillity restored and the Yeomanry would be dismissed.

The chief industrial disturbances happened at Frome, among the weavers, and in the colliery district around Radstock. Some-time towards the end of 1814 the Bath Troop was called to the Radstock district. On this occasion Captain Wiltshire killed a collier without apparent provocation. He was charged with man-slaughter, but at the Assizes, in April, 1815, he was acquitted, his defence being that his pistol went off by accident.\*

On the 1st of March, 1817, the miners in the Radstock district refused to work unless their wages were increased. There appears to have been no disturbances, but the North Somerset Yeomanry and the 23rd Lancers were rushed into the district. Four of the miners' leaders were arrested and taken to Ilchester Gaol. The Riot Act was read, so that the men could not hold meetings, and they soon returned to work.†

The weavers of Frome struck work in January, 1822, owing to the master clothiers reducing the price of cloth from 15d. to 13d. per yard. The Frome Squadron was called out, but the weavers soon returned to their looms. Shortly after, however, a considerable number of weavers from Trowbridge and other places marched into Frome with the intention of destroying the looms of those who had accepted the reduced rate. They did very little damage, for the Frome Yeomanry quickly assembled and made them beat a hasty retreat.‡

In July, the following year, the Frome weavers demanded the return of the old rate of payment. So serious did the agitation become that the whole of the North Somerset Yeomanry was drafted into the town to maintain order and protect private property. The Regiment was relieved on the 9th July by a detachment of the 14th Dragoons.§

The North Somerset Regiment of Yeomanry was called out on two occasions to suppress riots connected with the Militia. The first occasion was of an extremely serious nature. On the 16th May, 1810, the West Mendip Regiment of Local Militia, formerly the West Mendip Legion, assembled for permanent duty in Bath,

\* *Taunton Courier*, 13th April, 1815.

† *Taunton Courier*, 6th March, 1817.

‡ *Taunton Courier*, 19th January, 1822, and *History of North Somerset Yeomanry*.

§ *Western Flying Post*, 21st May, 1810.

and mutinied because the cost of a pair of trousers had been deducted from their "marching guinea." The ringleaders were arrested and imprisoned, but about 8 o'clock that night the privates of the Regiment marched in a body to their prison, broke open the doors and released them. The Bath Volunteer Cavalry and Regiment of Volunteer Infantry, together with the Lancashire Militia, which were stationed in Bath at the time, were assembled under arms. The released prisoners were soon recaptured, and the ringleaders of the party which attacked the prison were also taken.

The former were soon afterwards set at liberty, but the latter were tried by drum-head court-martial on Claverton Down on 18th May. The most active leader was sentenced to receive 50 lashes—a moderate flogging in those days—but when he was preparing himself for the punishment, his Commanding Officer, Colonel Rogers, with commendable lenity, reprieved him.

There were present at the court-martial, and to witness the flogging, not less than five regiments or corps, besides the West Mendip Regiment of Local Militia. They were: The 7th Light Dragoons, the Lancashire Militia, the Bath Volunteer Cavalry and Volunteer Infantry, and the Frome and East Mendip Regiment of Volunteer Cavalry.

The other Militia riot occurred on the 22nd January, 1813, in the neighbourhood of Radstock. But though, according to the *History of the North Somerset Yeomanry*, it was of a serious nature, we have not been able to gather much information about it.

Trouble was always expected when Somerset towns received a visit from Henry Hunt, the stormy petrel of reform. Mr. Hunt, who was a native of Wiltshire, and had once served in the Yeomanry himself, was not quite so black as he was painted during the time he was interested in politics. He does not appear to have incited his followers to burn hayricks, smash machinery, or destroy private property; but, unfortunately for him, his eloquence seems to have roused his more rowdy adherents to do these things. Consequently, there was always a considerable flutter wherever he made his appearance.

In December, 1816, Mr. Hunt was in Bristol, and on the 26th the North Somerset Yeomanry marched from Bath to be in readiness for anything which might result. On Sunday, 5th January, 1817, he visited Bath, and held a meeting "in his own

yard in Walcot Street." The North Somerset Yeomanry, the two Bath Rifle Volunteer Companies, and a squadron of the 23rd Lancers were called out under arms to ensure the safety of the city on this occasion. They were dismissed on the 7th January.\*

On every occasion on which they aided the civil power the Somerset Yeomanry appear to have conducted themselves with considerable restraint. This was in contrast with the action of the Lancashire Yeomanry at Hunt's famous Peterloo Meeting in Manchester in 1819. A tremendous concourse had assembled, some contemporary accounts say "upwards of 60,000 people," to hear "Orator" Hunt. But before a single word had been spoken the Lancashire Yeomanry charged the unarmed and inoffensive multitude. A great number were killed, trampled to death beneath the horses' hoofs, and many others were wounded. For his connection with the meeting Hunt was sentenced to imprisonment in Ilchester Gaol for two years and six months.†

In November and December, 1830, Mr. Hunt toured through Somerset, ostensibly to sell blacking.‡ Among other places he visited Chard, Glastonbury, and reached Taunton on the 4th December. In the course of a speech he said, "The incumbent of Ditcheat had been asked to reduce the tithe rents from £1,600 to £1,000 in order to relieve agriculture. He had refused to do so, but had been most forward in enrolling special constables. The incumbent of Doultong had also refused to reduce the tithes. At Glastonbury—where Mr. Hunt was Lord of the Manor—the Town Clerk had sworn in specials, a power which Mr. Hunt claimed to be his alone." Throughout his stay the Taunton Troop of Yeomanry were assembled under arms in the barrack yard; but their services were not required. A few days later the "Orator" was elected M.P. for Preston.

Mr. Hunt also visited Taunton in the beginning of February, 1831. The Taunton Troop was again called out under arms, and the Taunton magistrates augmented their forces by swearing in 200 special constables.§

\* *Taunton Courier*, 2nd and 9th January, 1817.

† *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1820, pt. I, p. 465.

‡ He also sold *anatto*, a substance of his own invention, for colouring cheese.

§ *Taunton Courier*, of various dates, and Letters in Home Office files, at the Public Record Office.

The extremely low depression of trade and agriculture in 1830 and 1831, the low wages and unparalleled poverty of the workers, make these years the gravest in the history of the 19th century. Unemployment was rife, and every parish was burdened with large numbers drawing parish pay. Castle Cary, with a population of 1,900, had 1,000 names on the parish books, while Frome distributed relief to upwards of 5,000. Large mobs of 500 to 1,000 would assemble in different places and fire hayricks, destroy threshing-machines, smash factories, burn down country houses, and demand money from rich people. To crown all this and, indeed, to accentuate it, the agitation for parliamentary reform was at its height.

Throughout this time the Yeomanry demonstrated their supreme value in the protection of private property. As a police force they were augmented by the swearing in of special constables all over the county. Bath swore in 700, Bridgwater Division 1,700, Williton Division 700, and Yeovil 300. The Langport Troop of the West Somerset Yeomanry was called out in anticipation of disturbances at Somerton, the North Somerset Yeomanry were assembled and various troops were stationed at Bruton, Winscombe and Shepton Mallet, while the Taunton Troop was called upon to be in readiness in consequence of disturbances being expected at Ilchester and Yeovil. A mob which was destroying threshing machines in the Henstridge district was attacked by a party of horsemen from Wincanton, and six of the rioters were taken prisoners. This party of horsemen formed the nucleus of the Wincanton Troop of the North Somerset Yeomanry which was formed shortly after.\*

As a result of the stern measures adopted order was soon restored.

In March, 1831, the agitation for Parliamentary reform bore fruit when Lord Russell introduced in the House of Commons the First Reform Act. In October the Act was thrown out by the House of Lords. The manner in which this set-back was received is best described by quoting the *Taunton Courier* of 12th October, 1831 † “The intelligence of the Rejection of the Reform Bill in the House of Lords, by a majority of 41, was brought to this town

\* *Taunton Courier*, Home Office Letters, and *History of North Somerset Yeomanry*, 1850.

† In this issue of the *Taunton Courier* appeared the report of the Rev. Sydney Smith's famous “Mrs. Partington” speech.

on Sunday morning last, and never within the quarter of a century, during which time we have conducted this Journal, have we witnessed so intense a feeling as that excited by this event." A tremendous crowd assembled in the streets. Dismay was written on every face, and indignation at the conduct of the Lords was expressed on every hand. Thus the news was received all over the country.

This excitement had scarcely subsided when a very serious riot broke out at Yeovil. It appears to have been a sequel to the election riots at Blandford, where a Reformer had been defeated by Lord Ashley, an anti-reformer. Many Blandford men were said to have been among the Yeovil rioters. The trouble began on Friday night, 21st October. The houses which first received the attention of the mob were the residences of Messrs. Tomkins, White, Edwin Newman, Robins, and Slade ("all professional agents to Lord Ashley"). All the windows were broken and every article of furniture was destroyed.\*

The Yeovil Magistrates ordered out the Martock and Mudford Troops of Yeomanry, but they were unable to assemble until the following morning. On the Saturday morning matters became more serious. The mob is said to have threatened to sack the town, but the Yeomanry appeared and two rioters were captured. They were brought before the Magistrates assembled at the Mermaid Inn, on which place the insurgents made an attack with a view to rescuing them. Six of the Yeomanry were then ordered to fire, four in the air and two at the rioters. One of the latter was wounded and the crowd dispersed. The Yeomanry kept the streets clear by constant patrols all day Saturday and throughout the night. On the Sunday the desire for further trouble had vanished. Other than the man who was wounded, the only casualties among the townspeople appear to have been George Soper, who received a sabre-wound, and a man named Parkhouse, "who was out, drunk, and was ridden over."†

The conduct of the Yeomanry was in every way praiseworthy. Though pelted with stones and bricks they refrained from retaliating. Though many of them suffered from bruises only one of the Yeomanry was seriously injured. This was Trooper Cattle, of

\* Letters published in the *Taunton Courier*, 26th October, 1831.

† Home Office Letters.

Hazelbury, near Crewkerne, a member of the Martock Troop, and he injured himself by accidentally discharging his pistol.\*

To show their appreciation of their conduct the townspeople of Yeovil presented each member of the Martock and Mudford Troops with a cup suitably inscribed.

On the 29th October, there occurred in Bristol what is probably the most terrible riot in the history of this country. It is mentioned here because it was the Bedminster Troop of the North Somerset Yeomanry which, acting on its own authority, first checked the mad progress of the rioters.

The riot had its origin in a demonstration against Sir Charles Wetherell, the Recorder of Bristol, who was visiting the city to open the Assizes. Sir Charles was an Anti-Reformer, and was detested as such throughout the country, but nowhere more than at Bristol.

About 10 o'clock on Saturday morning, the 29th October, a crowd of several thousand awaited his coming at Totterdown. About 10.30 his carriage appeared attended by nearly 500 special constables, armed with bludgeons. At first he was greeted with catcalls and groans. But soon the rowdier element, chiefly London rogues and hooligans who, it was said, had "sought pastures new" as a result of the efficiency of the newly-formed Metropolitan Police, began to assume command. The yells and groans were succeeded by stones and mud. Then some of the special constables set upon one man and killed him. The mob went mad.

Sir Chas. Wetherell managed to escape, but law and order were gone. Terror reigned. The thieves and rogues of Bristol began an orgy of plunder. The Customs House was plundered and burnt down. Bottles of spirits passed from hand to hand. The three prisons were attacked and destroyed, and the prisoners liberated. The residences of the rich were then looted; two sides of Queen's Square were destroyed by fire, and many of the drunken looters and foul hags who egged them on were consumed in the flames they themselves had started. Throughout the Saturday night the mob carried on unchecked. It was a sleepless night for Bristol; the people trembled behind locked doors and shuttered windows, while horror, torch in hand, walked the streets.

Next morning the Bishop's Palace was attacked and burnt to the ground. It was then that the Bedminster Troop, commanded

\* *Taunton Courier*, 26th October, 1831, and subsequent issues.

by Captain Shute, began to attack the rioters, in defiance of the Magistrates, who seemed afraid of still further rousing the anger of the mob.

In the meantime a request had been sent to Bath to send the Bath Troop to Bristol. Orders were sent to Captain Wilkins, and his troop soon began to assemble in Queen's Square. But the streets of Bath were crowded with people eager for news of the Revolution which, it was whispered, had started in Bristol. The crowd impeded the Yeomanry, and made it impossible for them to assemble. When Captain Wilkins appeared, about 6.30 in the evening, he was forced to seek shelter in the White Hart Inn. The Inn was then attacked, the windows were smashed and considerable damage done, but the crowd soon assumed a more orderly aspect. In spite of this, however, it was not until 5 o'clock next morning that the Bath Yeomanry were able to assemble two miles on the Bristol Road. By this time the whole of the North Somerset Regiment had been called out and was on its way to Bristol.

Besides the North Somerset Yeomanry, the military force in Bristol consisted of two six-pounder guns, a body of armed pensioners, a troop of the 3rd Dragoons, a squadron of the 14th Dragoons, and a squadron of the Gloucestershire Yeomanry. With these units continually patrolling the streets any fresh outbreaks were speedily checked and soon peace was restored.

The damage done by the rioters was estimated at £500,000. The number of people who lost their lives was never known. Twelve died of wounds in the hospitals, while 94 were treated for wounds and injuries. It was estimated that upwards of fifty were burnt to death in the ruins, and it is horrible to think that many of them were harmless occupiers of the destroyed houses.\*

A large number of the Bristol rioters made their way to Wells, evidently with the intention of attacking the Bishop's Palace.

Major-General James Bathurst wrote: "That there was a general disposition among the ill-disposed to take the opportunity of the 5th November and the Bull Baiting to attack the Palace." The Mudford Troop was sent to Wells and the Langport Troop was stationed at Glastonbury. Their arrival put an end to any plans which may have been formulated, for no attempt was made on the Palace.†

\* *Taunton Courier*, 2nd November, 1831.

† Home Office Letters.

In December, 1832, there was a serious election riot at Frome. The George and Crown Inns were attacked and entered, and the Frome Troop of Yeomanry was called upon to eject the rioters. The riot lasted two days, and several of the Yeomanry were wounded by stones thrown by the crowd. Lieut.-Colonel Wickham was in this way seriously wounded in the face.\*

It may have been during this riot that an incident occurred which gave the Frome Yeomanry their nickname. It is said a patrol was passing down a street one evening, when one of the men saw in the shadow of a building a dark form standing with arm upraised as though about to throw. The trooper dashed forward and with his sabre slashed at the raised arm, which proved to be the handle of a pump! Thus, tradition says, the Frome Yeomanry obtained their nickname of the "Frome Pumpchoppers."†

The North Somerset Yeomanry aided the Civil Power on several occasions after this, but none of the riots calls for special attention here. Various troops were called out on four occasions during 1839, and in 1847 there were food riots in various parts of the county. The Bath Troop was assembled under arms in anticipation of Chartist Meetings in 1848. In 1852 there was a riot at Clutton, and a serious one at Frome two years later.

The Yeomanry have reason to be proud of their part in the protection of private property. On many occasions a very considerable amount of damage might have been done if they had not appeared upon the scene. Above all, we cannot speak too highly of their conduct when facing a highly excited but unarmed crowd. Though a trooper might be hit by a stone hurled from the crowd, he would not dream of breaking ranks to chastise the thrower. And he thus gave a demonstration of discipline worthy of any Regular soldier.

\* *History of North Somerset Yeomanry, 1850.*

† See "Local Notes and Queries," in *Somerset County Herald*, 2nd Dec., 1922.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## PLACES WHERE UNITS WERE RAISED FROM 1794 TO 1859.

**T**HE following notes are compiled almost entirely from the Muster Rolls, Pay Lists, and Home Office Letters at the Public Record Office. Exceptions are indicated in the footnotes :—

**A**NSFORD—1803. Robert White, of this place, raised a Company composed of men from Ansford, Alford, North Cadbury, Lamyatt, Lydford, Hornblotton, North Barrow, and Castle Cary (the overflow from Captain John Burge's Company). This Company formed part of the Western Battalion of the 1st East Somerset Regiment of Volunteer Infantry (q.v.). The officers of the Company were Captain R. White, Lieutenant Thomas Helliar, of Ansford, and Ensign William Weston, of Castle Cary.\*

**A**XBRIDGE—1803. This town contributed a Company to the West Mendip Legion (q.v.).

**B**ANWELL—1803. An Independent Company of Volunteer Infantry was raised here under the command of Captain Edmund Shepherd, of Hutton Court. Its establishment was 60 privates. The other officers of the company were Lieutenant John Blackburrow and Ensign William Harrison.† In June, 1808, an order for the disbandment of the Company was cancelled at the request of Lord Poulett.

It was disbanded on 28th November, 1809.

**B**ATCOMBE—1803. Provided a troop of Yeomanry Cavalry, commanded by Captain Stephen Millard. The establishment was 40 privates. The troop formed part of the East Mendip Cavalry (q.v.). Captain Stephen Millard died on 5th September, 1813, and was succeeded in the command by Thomas Millard, the other officers at this time being Lieutenant John

\* *Castle Cary Visitor*, 1896-7, in which is published the names of the men.

† There appear to be no muster rolls or pay lists of this company at the Public Record Office. The particulars given are gathered from the Return of Volunteer Units, presented to the House of Commons in 1803, and *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1811, part ii., p. 213.

Combs and Cornet Edw. Davis. In 1817 the officers were Captain Thomas Millard, Lieutenant John Walter and Cornet William Gerrard. The Troop had ceased to exist by 1852.

BATH—1797. Bath offered to raise some Volunteer Infantry, but the offer was not accepted.

1798. On the 26th April a meeting was called by the Mayor of Bath to consider the formation of a Military Association for the defence of the Town. The Association, consisting of Cavalry and Infantry, was accepted by His Majesty the King on 23rd May, 1798. The Cavalry consisted of one troop under the command of Captain John Wiltshire. His subalterns were Lieutenant John Brander and Ensign Reuben Joyce.

The Infantry at first consisted of three companies, the first Company being commanded by Captain Peter Bossier and Lieutenants Young and Redwood ; the second Company by Captain W. Hayward Winstone and Lieutenants Edgecombe and Berry ; the third Company by Captain McConnel, with Lieutenants Charles Cobbe\* and W. W. Dimond. In July, 1798, however, the Infantry was reorganised into a corps commanded by Colonel John Glover, the other field officers being Lieutenant-Colonel J. Thompson and Major Peter Bossier. The companies were then commanded as follows : *Grenadier Company*, Captain Chas. Dumbleton, Lieutenants W. Brookland and C. W. Phillott ; *first Company*, Captain W. Hayward Winstone, Lieutenants W. Bury and Wm. Harris ; *second Company*, Captain G. E. Allen, Lieutenants W. W. Dimond and W. Stroud ; *Light Infantry Company*, Captain John Young and Lieutenants Abraham Redwood and J. Batten. The Infantry Companies were disbanded in May and the Cavalry in June, 1802.

1803. On 2nd August a meeting was held at the Guildhall, Bath, to consider the formation of a corps of Volunteer Cavalry. This corps was first composed of two troops, commanded by Captain John Wiltshire, the other officers being Lieutenants Farrant and Ball, and Cornet F. Guyenett. Throughout the greater part of its existence, however, it appears to have con-

\* Lieutenant Charles Cobbe died in July, 1798. He was nephew of the Marquis of Waterford, and M.P. for the Borough of Swords in the Irish Parliament. His interment took place in Weston (Bath) Churchyard, the Volunteers according him military honours. (*Bath Chronicle.*)

sisted of one troop only. In January, 1814, it was added to the North Somerset Yeomanry. It returned to its former status of an Independent Troop on April 6th the same year; but in November, 1815, we find it once more forming part of the North Somerset Yeomanry. The present (1923) Bath Squadron of the North Somerset Yeomanry can claim a direct descent from this troop, representing 120 years' continuous service as Yeomanry, and, for a very short period, as Royal Field Artillery.

About the time Captain Wiltshire was raising his Cavalry, Lieut.-Colonel John Strode, formerly of the Somerset Fencible Cavalry, was raising a Bath Regiment of Volunteer Infantry. This unit's services were accepted by His Majesty on 22nd August, 1803, and consisted of one Grenadier Company, eight Battalion Companies, and one Light Infantry Company, each of 75 privates. A Supernumerary Rifle Company of 75 privates was added later in the year. Lieut.-Colonel Strode was appointed the Colonel Commandant. The other officers in 1803 were: Lieutenant-Colonel Chas. Dumbleton, Major George Robinson, Captains John Brander, T. M. Cruttwell, Viscount Strangford, Thomas Lier, Joseph Shawe, H. Messiter, William Harris, W. Stroud, W. W. Dimond, Wm. Clarke, and — Ridpath; Lieutenants James Murray, William J. W. Taylor, — Spry, John Kitson, B. Williams, C. W. Phillott, and Robert Newcombe; Ensigns Thomas Griffith, William Day, and — Shaw; Adjutant J. F. Davis; Chaplain Rev. Chas. Phillott; Surgeon and Paymaster J. Nooth.

Colonel Strode died at his seat at Southill on the 22nd December, 1807, and was succeeded in the command by Lieut.-Colonel Chas. Dumbleton. In common with other Somerset Volunteers, the Bath Regiment of Volunteer Infantry was disbanded in 1814.

In a letter, dated 4th July, 1815, the Prince Regent accepted the offer of the City of Bath to raise two companies of Rifle Volunteers. The members were to serve without expense to the Government, and the letter directed that they should be attached to the North Somerset Yeomanry Cavalry. In September, 1826, their services were discontinued.

These particulars might lead some to think that Bath was lacking in patriotism in 1794. It is only fair to our most ancient

city to state that the 1st Som. Reg. of Fencible Cavalry was raised in Bath in 1794, and consisted almost entirely of Bath men.

**BATH FORUM—1803.** It was intended that Colonel Strode's Bath Regiment of Volunteer Infantry should cover the Hundred of Bath Forum. But the people of Bath wished to raise a Regiment themselves. Bath Forum, therefore, decided to raise a Regiment consisting of six companies of 100 privates each. The services of the unit were accepted in September, 1803. The officers in that year were : Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant James Stephens, of Camerton ; Lieut.-Colonel Thomas Joyce ; Major Reuben Joyce ; Captains Thomas Joyce, jun., Francis Naish, Jacob Wilkinson, William Stoddart, Benjamin Wingrove, and Richard Bowsher ; Lieutenants Samuel Perkins, John Joyce, jun., Ebenezer Brown, Robert Perks, Mark Evill, William Bennett, and Hiram B. Croome ; Ensigns William Perks, Thomas H. Haytor, Benjamin Yate, and George Bennett.

The Regiment was disbanded in 1814.

**BATHWICK—1803.** Contributed a company to the Bath Forum Regiment (q.v.).\*

**BECKINGTON—1798.** A troop of Volunteer Cavalry was raised in this place. The officers were : Captain Thomas Rogers, Lieutenant William Chislett, and Cornet Joseph Mitten. Disbanded in 1802.

1803. As the result of a meeting held on 21st July, 1803, the people of Beckington decided to form a corps of Volunteer Infantry. Upwards of 100 men joined immediately, and its total strength was expected to reach 200. The officers in November, 1804, were : Captain Samuel Dainton, Lieutenants James Carpenter and William Ford, Ensigns William Tranter and Henry Chislett. The Corps was disbanded in 1814.

According to the printed War Office lists of officers in the British Museum, there was also at this time a company of Artillery at Beckington. The officers in 1803 were : Captain George Friend, 1st Lieutenant John Friend and 2nd Lieutenant John Friend, jun. This is the only mention of this company which we have discovered. Indeed, it represents the only Company of Artillery formed in Somerset at this time of which we have official documentary evidence of existence.

\* *Bath Chronicle*, 21st July, 1803.

**BEDMINSTER—1817.** The offer of Mr. J. H. Smith to raise a troop of Yeomanry Cavalry, to be added to the North Somerset Yeomanry, was accepted on the 18th October. The officers were : Captain J. H. Smith, Lieutenant G. Parkin, and Cornet J. E. Ware. The troop is represented to this day by the Bedminster Squadron of the North Somerset Yeomanry.

**BISHOP'S LYDEARD—1798.** A company of Volunteer Infantry was raised here. The officers in 1798 were : Captain John Fisher, Lieutenant Thomas Charter, and Ensign Richard Cox. The Company was disbanded on the 22nd February, 1802, after “a grand spree at the Crown Inn.”\*

**BITTON—1820.** *The History of the North Somerset Yeomanry Cavalry, 1850*, contains a mention of “the Bitton troop,” which was warned to aid the civil power in November, 1820. Nothing further is known about this troop.

**BLAGDON (nr. Bristol)—1803.** A troop of Volunteer Cavalry, consisting of 50 privates, was raised here, and was accepted by the Government on 22nd August, 1803. The members undertook to serve “without expense to the Government.” The officers in 1803 were : Captain Samuel Baker, Lieutenant Robert Beaks Simmons† and Cornet John Good. On the 13th May, 1816, His Royal Highness the Prince Regent accepted the resignation of Captain Baker, and the other officers of the corps, and agreed to “the services of that corps being discontinued.”

Blagdon also contributed a company of Volunteer Infantry to the East Mendip Legion (q.v.). In 1803 the officers were : Captain John Inman, Lieutenant William Young, and Ensign William Baker.

**BOURTON (?) Flax Bourton—1798.** The Bourton Military Association raised a company of Volunteer Infantry. The officers first appointed were : Captain James Sparrow, Lieutenant Thomas Keedwell, and Ensign Thomas Spencer. Disbanded in 1802.

**BRIDGWATER—1794.** A corps of two Companies of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of 60 privates each, was raised here in 1794. The officers at that time were : Major Thomas Allen,

\* War Office Lists of Officers, 1799, at the British Museum, and *Western Flying Post*, of 1st March, 1802.

† The unit is mentioned in a letter from the Duke of Portland to Lord Poulett, dated 23rd August, 1798, but no names. (See also Congresbury.)

Captain Jeffery Allen, Lieutenants Henry Sweeting and Joseph Jeffery, Ensigns Joseph Darch and Robert Codrington. Francis Adam Stradling was appointed Ensign on 16th September, 1795, and William Anstice became Quartermaster and Surgeon on 21st October, 1795. This corps was disbanded in 1802.

1803. At this time Bridgwater provided a corps of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of five companies of 70 privates each. The unit was not confined to the town, as we read that "one Company was nine miles away, and two others were four and five miles away from Headquarters." The officers in 1803 were : Lieut.-Colonel Commandant Jefferys Allen, M.P. for the Borough, Major Joseph Jeffery, Captains Robert Codrington, Robert Anstice, Joseph Ruscombe Poole, John Chapman, Francis Adam Stradling, Lieutenants Edward Sealy, Jacob Watson, John Sealy, George Parker, and John Linston, Ensigns John William Trevor, William Parker, John Webber Cross, Charles Trevor, and William Sparke, Surgeon Symes, Quartermaster William Came. Ensign John Webber Cross was appointed Captain and Adjutant on 3rd April, 1804.

1805. In January of this year we find the first mention of the Bridgwater Troop of the West Somerset Yeomanry, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel C. K. K. Tynte. It is presumed that this troop is really the Brymore Troop (q.v.) under another name.

**BRUTON—1803.** A corps of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of two companies, was raised here in August, 1803. The officers of the first Company were : Captain Edward Michell, Lieutenant John Sharrer Ward, and Ensign William Harding. The officers of the second Company were : Captain Henry Sampson Michell, Lieutenant John Penny, and Ensign John Phelps. In January, 1804, these two companies were joined with the West Pennard and Wells Corps of Infantry to form the Second East Somerset Regiment of Volunteer Infantry. It had previously been attached to the First East Somerset Regiment.

**BRYMORE—1794.** Sir Phillip Hales raised a troop of Yeomanry Cavalry, consisting of 50 privates, which was afterwards known as the Brymore Troop. It is assumed that Sir Phillip resided at Brymore House, nr. Bridgwater. The troop was accepted by the Somerset County Committee on the 24th July, 1794, and was designated the 5th Troop of Somerset Gentlemen and

**Yeomanry Cavalry.** The only officers in 1794 were : Captain Sir Phillip Hales and Lieutenant The Hon. Hugh Somerville. In 1798 the troop was amalgamated with the Milverton and Wellington Troops to form the West Somerset Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry. It is possible that this troop became the Bridgwater Troop, which we find mentioned in 1805.

**BURNHAM—1803.** Contributed a company to the Western Regiment of the Mendip Legion (q.v.).

**BUTLEIGH—1803.** A company of 60 privates, which was attached to the Somerton and Langport Regiment of Volunteer Infantry. The officers in 1803 were : Captain John Reynolds, Lieutenant Charles Dauncey, and Ensign John Tucker. Accepted service in the Local Militia in August, 1808.

**BURRINGTON—1798.** A Company of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of 64 privates, was raised here in 1798.\*

1803. A Company of Volunteer Infantry was raised and attached to the East Mendip Legion. The officers in 1803 were : Captain John Newman Wyld, Lieutenant Thomas Eblett, and Ensign John Somers.

The parish agreed to turn out, nearly to a man, in different capacities, in case of invasion.

**CASTLE CARY—1794.** To this town belongs the honour of raising the first troop of Somerset Yeomanry. It was raised in May, 1794, by Robert Stevens, of Ansford, and subsequently formed part of the East Somerset Yeomanry. The strength was 50 privates. The officers in 1794 were : Captain Robert Stevens, Lieutenant Samuel Burge, and Cornet James Leach. When Robert Stevens died on the 15th March, 1802, he was succeeded in the command of the troop in April, 1803, by William Dickenson, junior. The troop was disbanded in 1828.

1803. Castle Cary contributed a Company of Volunteer Infantry to the Western Battalion of the 1st East Somerset Regiment of Volunteer Infantry. In 1804 the officers were : Captain John James Burge and Lieutenant Joseph Bulgin. The Company accepted Local Militia service in 1809.

**CHARD—1798.** A company of Volunteer Infantry raised here. The officers were : Captain John Richard Clarke, Lieutenant Charles Edwards, and Ensign John Wheaton. It is assumed

\* *Bath Chronicle*, 24th May, 1798.

that, in common with other Volunteer Units, it was disbanded in 1802.

**CHARLTON** (? Charlton Adam or Charlton Mackrell)—1803. A Company of 60 privates formed part of the Somerton and Langport Regiment of Volunteer Infantry. In 1803 the officers were : Captain Charles Pitt, Lieutenant John Knight, and Ensign John Perry. Accepted Local Militia service in August, 1808.

**CHEDDAR**—1803. A company was formed here in 1803, which formed part of the Western Regiment of the Mendip Legion (q.v.)

**CHEW AND CHEWTON**—1798. A corps of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of three companies. The officers in 1798 were : Major James Tooker, Captains James Stephens, John Billingsley, and Joseph Hill ; Captain-Lieutenant Richard Langford ; Lieutenants Samborne Palmer and William Miles ; Ensigns Francis Bowcher Wright, Thomas Randall, and William Hippisley. The corps was disbanded in 1802.

**CHURCHILL**—1803. One company of Volunteer Infantry, which was attached to the East Mendip Legion. The officers in 1803 were : Captain John Fisher, Lieutenant John Poole, and Ensign Joseph Harris.

**CLIFTON**—1803. Sir John Jervis' Corps of Somerset Riflemen was raised in the vicinity of Clifton, where Sir John lived.\* The corps consisted of two companies, the officers of which were : 1<sup>st</sup> Company—Captain Sir John Jervis White Jervis, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant John Nason, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Charles Payne ; 2<sup>nd</sup> Company—Captain Samuel Span and Lieutenant Thomas Protheroe. The corps was disbanded in 1813.

**COMBE ST. NICHOLAS**—1798. One company of Volunteer Infantry. The officers in 1798 were : Captain John Cooke, Lieutenant Joseph Winter, and Ensign William Walter. The Company was disbanded in 1802.

**COMBHAY**—1803. The *Bath Chronicle*, of the 11th August, 1803, states : “A corps of Artillery is forming at Combhay from the workmen employed on the Somerset Coal Canal.” No mention of this unit can be found in official records.

\* E. T. Morgan's *Bristol Volunteers*.

**COMPTON MARTIN—1803.** A company of Volunteer Infantry of the East Mendip Legion (q.v.). The officers in 1803 were : Captain Benjamin Burgess, Lieutenant Henry Collings, and Ensign Edward Bennett.

**CONGRESBURY—1803.** A company of Volunteer Infantry, which belonged to the East Mendip Legion (q.v.). The officers at the time of formation were : Captain Robert Beakes Simmons, Lieutenant John Tripp, and Ensign Thomas Hammans.

**CORSTON—1803.** Raised a small Company, although it contained only “ 46 persons capable of actual service.”\* No mention of Corston in official records.

**CRANMORE—1803.** Men were raised here for the East Mendip Cavalry (q.v.), but there do not appear to have been sufficient for a troop. They probably formed a troop with Doultong (q.v.)†

**CREECH ST. MICHAEL—1798.** A company was formed here, which was known as the “ Somerset Volunteer Rifle Company.” The officers proposed in the first instance were : Captain William Burridge, Lieutenant Richard Crosse, and Ensign Bonner Collins. The Chaplain was the Rev. Thomas Strangways. In the pay list of 1798 we find the Ensign is Richard Bridge. This Company of “ Somerset Riflemen ” was disbanded in 1802.

**CREWKERNE—1798.** A company of Volunteer Infantry, commanded by Captain William Gray, Lieutenant Isaac Sparks, and Ensign Samuel Wills. The officers recommended in the original proposal, however, were : Captain John Hallett and Lieutenant Samuel Daniell. Disbanded in 1802.

1803. It was proposed to raise two troops of Yeomanry in August, 1803, but apparently only one materialised. This troop was attached to the East Somerset Yeomanry Cavalry (q.v.). Earl Poulett commanded the Crewkerne Troop, and about this time he also became Colonel of the East Somerset Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry. The troop ceased to exist with the disbandment of the Regiment in 1828.

About the time the Yeomanry was being raised Captain William Gray was forming a corps of Volunteer Infantry,

\* *Bath Chronicle*, 1st September, 1803.

† *Bath Chronicle*, 22nd September, 1803.

consisting of two companies of 70 privates each. The officers in 1803 were : *1st Company*, Captain William Gray, Lieutenant Barth Gidley, and Ensign John Phelps ; *2nd Company*, Captain Isaac Sparks, Lieutenant Robert Perham, and Ensign Edward Marley, junior.

In January, 1804, the South Petherton Company (q.v.) was attached to it, and the combined unit became known as the Crewkerne and Petherton Corps of Volunteer Infantry. Captain Gray was promoted Major Commandant, 14th January, 1804. The corps was disbanded in 1814.

**CROWCOMBE—1798.** The Crowcombe Volunteer Infantry Association raised one company. The officers were : Captain James Bernard, Lieutenant George Legge, and Ensign Moses Gard. The company was disbanded in 1802.

**DITCHEAT—1803.** Although there were only 175 males between 17 and 55 years of age, this small place contributed two companies of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of 75 privates each. The officers appointed in 1803 were : Captains Richard Leir and James Woodforde, and Lieutenants George Selwin Dawe and John Hannam. The companies appear to have been attached at first to the 2nd East Somerset Regiment of Volunteer Infantry, but in 1805 we find them forming part of the Western Battalion of the 1st East Somerset Regiment of Volunteer Infantry. Captain Richard Leir became Major of this Battalion. The men accepted service in the Local Militia in August, 1808, "and also to go to any part on the Continent."

**DODINGTON—1798.** The Dodington Military Association, formed in 1798, consisted of one troop of Volunteer Cavalry and two companies of Volunteer Infantry. The officers were : *Cavalry*, Captain Owen Gray, Lieutenant Hardy Johnson, and Cornet William Johnson. *Infantry, 1st Company*, Captain H. Delves Broughton and Lieutenant Rowland Hill ; *2nd Company*, Captain Robert Hutchinson Lewis, Lieutenant William Matthews, and Ensign Cornelius Corthorn. Captain Broughton's Company appears to have been raised in 1797. The association was disbanded in 1802.

**DOULTING—1803.** Men for the East Mendip Cavalry were raised here in 1803, and apparently formed a troop with Cranmore.\*

\* *Bath Chronicle*, 22nd September, 1803.

**DULVERTON—1798-99.** A troop of Yeomanry Cavalry, which was attached to the West Somerset Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry. This troop existed until 1859, when it was amalgamated with the Dunster Troop.

1803. Two companies of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of 60 privates each. The officers in 1803 were: *1st Company*, Captain Henry Luxmore, Lieutenant John Beague, junior, and Ensign Thomas Carter; *2nd Company*, Captain William Sterne, Lieutenant William Sterne, junior, and Ensign John Snow. The corps was disbanded on 28th November, 1809.

**DUNSTER—1796.** Eighteen men, forming a Dunster Division, joined the Milverton Corps of Yeomanry Cavalry on the 11th March, 1796. It developed into a troop on the 24th December, 1800. The officers at that time were: Captain John Lyddon, Lieutenant William Crang, and Cornet John Weech. The troop was amalgamated with the Dulverton Troop in 1859.

1798. At this time Dunster was associated with Minehead in the Minehead and Dunster Volunteer Infantry Association. Only one company appears to have been raised. The officers in 1798 were: Captain John F. Luttrell, Lieutenant Murdock Mackenzie, and Ensign Richard Seton. The company was disbanded on the 19th June, 1802.

**EAST BRENT—1803.** A company of Volunteer Infantry, which formed part of the West Mendip Legion (q.v.).

**EAST COKER—1803.** One troop of Yeomanry Cavalry, consisting of 40 privates. By the end of the year the strength of the troop exceeded this number. The troop was added to the East Somerset Yeomanry Cavalry in April, 1808, *vice* the 2nd Taunton Troop; and was disbanded on the dissolution of the Regiment in 1828.

**EAST HARPTREE—1803.** Furnished a company of Volunteer Infantry for the East Mendip Legion (q.v.). The officers in 1803 were: Captain George Pope, Lieutenant James Vowles, and Ensign — Wollen.

1817. A squadron of 107 privates was raised here in 1817 and attached to the North Somerset Yeomanry Cavalry. The officers of the 1st Troop in 1817 were: Captain J. James, Earl Waldegrave, Lieutenant William Savage, and Cornet William Smith. The 2nd Troop was commanded by Captain

H. Walley. The squadron did not have a long life, for neither troop existed in 1844.\*

**EAST MENDIP VOLUNTEER CAVALRY—1803.** Consisted of four troops of 50 privates each, raised at Mells, Shepton Mallet, Batcombe, and Cranmore and Doulting. In November, 1803, the Nunney Company of Volunteer Infantry, whose establishment was 100 privates, was attached to this corps. The Lieut.-Colonel Commandant was T. Strangways Horner. On the 10th June, 1804, it was amalgamated with the Frome Squadron of Volunteer Cavalry, and was thereafter known as the Frome and East Mendip Regiment of Volunteer Cavalry (q.v.).

**EAST MENDIP LEGION—1803.** Consisted of one troop of Volunteer Cavalry of 50 privates, and ten companies of Volunteer Infantry of 75 privates each. The Infantry Companies were located at Burrington, Wrington, Yatton, Churchill, Compton Martin, East Harptree, Roborough, Blagdon, Nempnett, and Congresbury. The names of the officers with the exception of Wrington are given under the place names of companies. The field officers in 1803 were Colonel the Right Hon. John Hiley Addington, Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Shepherd and Adjutant-Captain John Robertson. The unit was converted into a Regiment of Local Militia in 1808.

**EAST SOMERSET REGIMENT OF VOLUNTEER INFANTRY (FIRST)—1803.** This unit consisted of twelve companies of 90 privates each, and embraced Ansford, Castle Cary, North Cadbury, Yarlington, Ditcheat (2), Sutton Montis, Wincanton (2 Coys.), Henstridge (2), and Horsington. The officers first appointed were: Colonel John Berkeley Burland, Lieut.-Colonel Henry Hobhouse, Major George Scott; Captains William Woodforde, Robert White, Uriah Messiter, Robert Gapper, William Webb, Edward Michell, John Gapper, Thomas Sewell Bailward, and Francis Rogers; Lieutenants John Jeanes, Richard Ring, Robert Combe, Henry Hope, Thomas Bird, Lazarus Bewsey, John Penny, J. S. Ward, John Field, William Dowding, and John Burge; Ensigns Henry Melhuish, William Mullins, Peter Martin, John Phelps, William Harding, Thomas Helliar, Joseph Bulgin, and John Loader. Colonel Burland died in 1804, and in December Lord Poulett proposed that the Regiment should be divided into two Battalions. One was called the Eastern

\* *History of North Somerset Yeomanry, 1850.*

Battalion of the 1st East Somerset Regiment of Volunteer Infantry, and the other the Western Battalion. Apparently, Major Scott became the Lieutenant-Colonel-Commandant of the former, which comprised the Wincanton, Henstridge and Horsington Companies. It was disbanded on the 28th November, 1809. The senior officers of the Western Battalion in 1805 were : Lieutenant-Colonel-Commandant Henry Hobhouse, Lieutenant-Colonel William Woodforde, Major Richard Leir, Paymaster and Ensign George Selwyn Dawe, and Adjutant-Captain O'Callaghan. This Battalion was converted into the East Somerset Local Militia in August, 1808.

**EAST SOMERSET REGIMENT OF VOLUNTEER INFANTRY (SECOND)—1803.** This regiment was formed by uniting the Wells, West Pennard and Bruton Companies. The names of the field officers were : Lieutenant-Colonel-Commandant Chas. Knatchbull, Lieut.-Colonel Clement Tudway, Major Richard Beadon. The company officers are given under the place names of companies. Disbanded in 1814.

**EAST SOMERSET REGIMENT OF GENTLEMEN AND YEOMANRY CAVALRY—1798.** This unit appears to have been formed by the amalgamation of the Castle Cary, North Perrott, Yeovil, Taunton, and Martock Troops, and the attachment of a newly-raised troop at Wincanton. It was commanded by Colonel Robert Stevens, the other field officers being Lieutenant-Colonel John Hanning and Major William Hoskins. In 1803 Colonel Stevens died, and was succeeded in the command by Earl Poulett. About this time there were added the Crewkerne and Ilminster Troops, making eight troops of 60 privates each, with Captain Warre's 2nd Taunton Troop raised in 1799. The 2nd Taunton Troop was disbanded in 1808, and the East Coker Troop was added in its place. In 1817 the senior officers were : Colonel Earl Poulett, Lieut.-Colonel John Tyndale Warre, and Major William Lambert White. In 1825 they were : Lieut.-Colonel-Commandant William Dickenson, Lieut.-Colonel William Lambert White, and Major James Bennett. The Regiment was disbanded in 1828. On the 5th September that year Colonel Dickenson gave a dinner to the officers, when a presentation was made to Lieut.-Colonel W. L. White in recognition of his services in the Yeomanry from the formation of the Yeovil Troop in 1794 to the dissolution of the Regiment.

FAIRFIELD—1798. A company of Volunteer Infantry was raised by “John Acland, Esq., of Fairfield, in Somersetshire.”

FARLEY AND WRAXALL. The *Bath Chronicle*, of 28th April, 1804, mentioned a troop of Yeomanry in connection with this district which was commanded by J. Long, Esq. No trace in official documents.

FIVEHEAD—1798. A company of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of 60 privates. The officers in 1798 were : Captain Joseph Bullen, Lieutenant Francis Richardson, and Ensign William Norman. Disbanded in 1802.

FRESHFORD—1798. Found “an armed Association of gentlemen, manufacturers, etc.” It consisted of one company of Volunteer Infantry. The officers were : Captain Thomas Joyce Lieutenant John Joyce, and Ensign Richard Whittington. Disbanded in 1802.

FROME—1798. In May a “Military Association” was formed which raised a troop of Volunteer Cavalry, consisting of 60 privates, and one company of Volunteer Infantry of 100 privates. The officers first appointed to the former were : Captain James Anthony Wickham, Lieutenant Thomas Bunn, and Cornet Samuel Bowden. J. C. Middleton was soon afterwards appointed Cornet in place of Bowden, who was asked to resign. The officers who were first elected to the Infantry were : Captain John Jesser, Lieutenant William Carter, and Ensign Edward Olive. Henry Sheppard, junior, was appointed Captain *vice* Jesser, and John Wayland Lieutenant *vice* William Carter. Both units were disbanded in 1802.

1803. The Frome Volunteers of this time are often confused with the “Selwood Forest Legion.” This title was applied to the combined Frome units and the Beckington Volunteers when they were first formed. The Frome Volunteers raised in 1803, consisted of two troops of Volunteer Cavalry of 66 privates each, and three companies of Volunteer Infantry of 97 men each. The whole were commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel-Commandant Thomas Swymmer Champneys. The officers of the Cavalry in 1803 were : 1st Troop, Captain James Anthony Wickham, Lieutenant Job White, and Cornet Jonathan Noad. 2nd Troop, Captain Thomas W. Ledyard, Lieutenant William Chislet, and Cornet John Yeoman. The officers of the Infantry were : Captains John Olive, George Sheppard and

Edward Olive ; Lieutenants James Slade, John King and John Middleton ; Ensigns William Olive, Henry Ryall and Henry Fussell ; Surgeon James Pearce. On the 8th March, 1804, Colonel Champneys resigned in consequence of a quarrel with Lord Poulett. On the 10th June the same year the two troops of Cavalry were amalgamated with the East Mendip Regiment of Volunteer Cavalry, the whole being commanded by Colonel T. S. Horner. The combined unit was known as the Frome and East Mendip Regiment of Volunteer Cavalry, and its title was changed to "North Somerset Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry" in 1814. The Frome Companies of Volunteer Infantry were disbanded in 1814.

**GLASTONBURY—1798.** In May, 1798, a Military Association was formed for local defence.

1803. As the result of a meeting of the inhabitants, held in August, two companies of Volunteer Infantry were raised. The officers in 1803 were : Captains J. J. Roach and John Holman, Lieutenants John Bond and John Down, junior, and Ensigns Robert Bath and J. Bath. There is no trace of these companies in official documents.\*

**HENSTRIDGE—1803.** Two companies of Volunteer Infantry. The first company was commanded by Captain John Gapper, and the second company by Captain Gray. Both belonged to the 1st East Somerset Regiment of Volunteer Infantry (q.v.).†

**HORSINGTON—1803.** A company of Volunteer Infantry, which was attached to the 1st East Somerset Regiment of Volunteer Infantry (q.v.), commanded by Captain Thomas Sewell Bailward.

**HUTTON—1803.** Contributed a company to the West Mendip Legion (q.v.).

**HUNTPSILL—1803.** Contributed a company to the West Mendip Legion (q.v.).

**ILCHESTER—1803.** A company of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of 100 privates. Its services were accepted on the 22nd August, 1803. The officer commanding at that time was Captain George Tuson. The other officers were Lieutenant Neast G.

\* *Bath Chronicle*, 24th May, 1798, and 1st September, 1803.

† The Muster Rolls of the Henstridge and Horsington Companies are in the Green Collection at the Bristol Central Library.

Prideaux and Ensign Samuel Forward. It was incorporated in the Yeovil Sub-Division Regiment of Volunteer Infantry on the 1st September, 1803.

ILMINSTER—1798. A company of Volunteer Infantry was raised and commanded by Captain William Speke. It is assumed that it was disbanded in 1802.

1803. A troop of Yeomanry was raised here, and was attached to the East Somerset Yeomanry (q.v.). The officers at the time of its formation were : Captain George Walters, Lieutenant William Banger, and Cornet R. J. Bryant. Disbanded in 1828.

1831. On February 28th authority was given for the formation of an Ilminster Troop of Yeomanry, under the command of Captain J. Lee. In 1838 it was permitted to continue its services. The troop was then under the command of Captain Quantock. Disbanded 28th February, 1847.

1859. A troop of Yeomanry was formed at Ilminster, and attached to the West Somerset Yeomanry.

KEYNSHAM—1817. A troop of Yeomanry was raised here by Mr. T. Bevan, and was attached to the North Somerset Yeomanry. It was accepted by the Prince Regent on the 14th April, 1817. The officers at the time of its formation were : Captain Thomas Bevan, Lieutenant Thomas Edwards, and Cornet John Stout Stibbs. The troop became known popularly as the "Cos-sacks." Disbanded September, 1841.

KINGSBURY—1798. A company of Volunteer Infantry. Officers were : Captain John Beck Willey, Lieutenant Stephen England, and Ensign John Gardner. The company was disbanded in 1802.

KINGSDON—1803. Supplied a company of 60 privates to the Somerset and Langport Regiment of Volunteer Infantry. The officers in 1803 were : Captain Aaron Moody, Lieutenant Joseph Beard, and Ensign Giles Stuckey. The officers and men were transferred to the Local Militia in 1808.

KINGSTON—1831. A troop of Yeomanry was raised at Kingston and commanded by Captain Thomas G. Warrington Carew. It formed part of the Taunton Corps (q.v.).

LANGPORT—1794. Two companies of Volunteer Infantry. The officers first appointed were : Major-Commandant John Chambers, Captain Richard Michell, 1st Lieutenants Edward

Ash and Walter Stuckey, 2nd Lieutenants T. B. Michell and Thomas Viney. 2nd Lieutenant John Michell was appointed in 1795, and William Sharrock was made Quartermaster in 1796. Disbanded 14th May, 1802.

1798. A troop of Yeomanry, which was amalgamated in May, 1799, with the Milverton, Wellington and Brymore Troops to form the West Somerset Regiment of Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry. The officers were : Captain John Warren, Lieutenant R. Uttermare, and Cornet Joseph Richards. Captain Warren was still in command of this troop in 1819.

1803. Three companies of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of 60 privates each, under the command of Major John Chambers, were accepted by the Prince Regent on the 13th August, 1803. The following were the officers : *1st Company*, Major John Chambers, 1st Lieutenant John Michell, 2nd Lieutenant Samuel Slatter; *2nd Company*, Captain Walter Stuckey, 1st Lieutenant Richard Pople Caines, 2nd Lieutenant Azariah Elswood; *3rd Company*, Captain Thomas Viney and Lieutenant William Norman. In the following year they were united with the Somerton Volunteers to form the Somerton and Langport Regiment (q.v.). Transferred to the Local Militia in 1808.

**LONG SUTTON—1803.** A company of Volunteer Infantry of 60 privates, which formed part of the Somerset and Langport Regiment. The officers in 1802 were : Captain Joseph Banbury, 1st Lieutenant Robert Welsh, and 2nd Lieutenant William Parker. Transferred to Local Militia in 1808.

**MARK—1803.** Furnished a Volunteer Infantry Company in the West Mendip Legion. The officers in February, 1804, were : Captain James Parker,\* Lieutenant Solomon Pain, and Ensign Thomas Hughes. Accepted Local Militia service in 1809.

**MARTOCK—1794.** A troop of Yeomanry Cavalry, which was accepted by the Somerset County Committee in September, 1794. The officers in 1794 were : Captain Andrew Bain, Lieutenant S. Prior Bean, and Cornet William Ball. In 1798 the troop was amalgamated with the Castle Cary and other troops to form the East Somerset Regiment of Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry. Disbanded in 1828.

\* James Parker belonged to Westham, in the Parish of Wedmore, which adjoins Mark.

1798. At this time there were raised in Martock two companies of Volunteer Infantry. The officers were : Captains Thomas Potenger and John Potenger Westcote, 1st Lieutenants George Lilley and William Adams, and Ensign H. Culliford. The companies were disbanded in 1802.

1831. The members of the Martock Troop of Yeomanry had scarcely put away their uniforms when the country became extremely agitated over the Reform Laws. The Yeomanry were augmented by independent troops, and the Martock Troop was reformed under the command of Captain Tatchell. Its activities in the riots of 1831 are detailed elsewhere. It is believed to have been disbanded in 1838.

**MELLS**—1798. Mells formed a Cavalry Association consisting of one troop of Volunteer Cavalry. The officers appointed on the 23rd October, 1798, were : Captain Thomas Paget, Lieutenant Henry Shore, and Cornet James Fussell. The troop was disbanded in 1802.

1803. A troop of Volunteer Cavalry, raised by Thomas Strangways Horner, formed the nucleus of the East Mendip Regiment of Volunteer Cavalry (q.v.). The officers in 1803 were : Lieut.-Colonel T. S. Horner, Lieutenant James Fussell, junr., and Cornet James Candy. A second troop was raised, apparently in 1807. In 1817 the officers of the two troops were : 1st Troop, Captain John Stewart Hippisley, Lieutenant Henry Shore, and Cornet Richard Candy ; 2nd Troop, Captain John Moor Paget, Lieutenant George Messiter, and Cornet Thomas Able. The second troop was disbanded in 1842. The other troop was still in existence in 1880.

**MIDSOMER NORTON**—1803. Two troops of Cavalry were raised in August under the command of Captain-Commandant John Hawksey Ackerley.

**MILVERTON**—1794. Two troops of Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry, raised by John Southey Somerville, afterwards Lord Somerville. The names of the officers are given in Chap. II. Milverton contributed at least one troop to the West Somerset Yeomanry, and a part of a squadron was stationed there down to 1914.

1798. A company of Volunteer Infantry. The officers in 1798 were : Captain John Weech, Lieutenant John Nurton,

and Ensign George Llewellyn Cross. Disbanded on 4th June, 1802.

1803. One company of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of 104 privates. The officers in 1803 were : Captain John Weech, Lieutenants John Cridland and George Llewellyn Cross, Ensign John Chappell.

The company was disbanded in April, 1808.

MINEHEAD. (See DUNSTER.)

MONKTON COMBE—1803. The inhabitants of this place met in the Churchyard on the 8th August and passed the following spirited resolution : “ The People of Monkton Combe determine to stand or fall with the *King and Country*. Their young men with one assent *volunteer* their services, and they whome circumstances render incapable of military duty will contribute pecuniary assistance to the strong and willing. They trust that their Fellow-Citizens throughout the *whole Empire*, being actuated by the same motive, will be animated by the same spirit ; and they flatter themselves that on a comparative examination of the strength and opulence of their *little village* with the population and wealth of other places they will not be found wanting in the discharge of their proportion of Duty in the General Cause.” The Company was commanded by Captain Benjamin Wingrove, and formed part of the Bath Forum Regiment of Volunteer Infantry (q.v.).

MONKSILVER—1799. There was a Monksilver “ Division ” of the West Somerset Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry in 1799.\* It is assumed that it amalgamated with Dunster to form the Dunster Troop attached to that Regiment.

MONTACUTE—1803. On 20th August, 1803, “ about 100 men assembled on the lawn of the seat of the Rev. William Phelps and enrolled as Volunteers.”† It is presumed that they formed part of the Yeovil Sub-Division Regiment of Volunteer Infantry,

MUDFORD—1831. In January, 1831, a troop of Yeomanry, consisting of 60 privates, was raised to cope with the militant Reformers. It was commanded by Captain Harbin, and is believed to have been disbanded in 1838.

\* *West Somerset Yeomanry Order Book.*

† *Western Flying Post*, 22nd August, 1803.

**NEMPNETT—1803.** The Nemppnett Company of Volunteer Infantry was attached to the East Mendip Legion (q.v.). In 1803 the officers were: Captain John Hellier, Lieutenant Sam. Vowles and Ensign Benjamin Bennett.

**NEWTON ST. LOE—1803.** On the 24th August the inhabitants met in the Churchyard, “where being addressed by the Rector, and the nature of their services as volunteers explained, every man in the parish capable of bearing arms, to the number of 77, willingly enrolled his name.”\*

**NORTH CADBURY—1803.** One company of Volunteer Infantry consisting of 80 privates. The officers in 1803 were: Captain James Bennett, Lieutenant William Clothier, and Ensign Samuel Bull. The company was attached to the 1st East Somerset Regiment of Volunteer Infantry in December, 1803.

**NORTH MARSH—1844.** The first mention of a North Marsh Troop of the North Somerset Yeomanry is made in connection with the year 1844 in the *History of the North Somerset Yeomanry*.

**NORTH PERROTT—1794.** This place was the headquarters of a troop of Yeomanry raised by William Hoskyns, Esq. The services of the troop were accepted by the County Committee on the 30th July, 1794. The officers of the troop in 1794 were: Captain William Hoskyns and Lieutenant Thomas Hoskyns. John Perkins was appointed Cornet on the 20th May, 1795. The troop was amalgamated in 1798 with the Castle Cary and other troops to form the East Somerset Yeomanry.

**NORTH PETHERTON—1798.** A corps of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of two companies. The officers in 1799 were Major-Commandant Richardson Harrison, Captain Edward Symes, Lieutenants Thomas Hearne and William Harrison, and Ensigns John Bullen Coulthurst and John Baker. Disbanded in 1802.

**NORTH SOMERSET YEOMANRY CAVALRY—1814.** This was the title given to the Frome and East Mendip Regiment of Volunteer Cavalry (q.v.) in 1814. In 1815 the Regiment was augmented by the Ston Easton Troop, whose services were accepted by the Prince Regent on the 19th May. On 4th July, the same year, the two Bath Rifle Companies were added. On the 24th February, 1817, two troops were raised at East Harptree, and another at Keynsham on the 14th April, all of which were

\* *Bath Chronicle*, 1st September, 1803.

attached to the North Somerset Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry. In 1818 the Bedminster Troop was added. In 1820 there were 10 troops ; in 1842 there were only 8. On the 10th September, 1839, Colonel T. Strangways Horner resigned the command of the Regiment which he had held for 35 years. He was succeeded by his son, Lieutenant-Colonel T. Fortescue Horner, who died in 1843. The command of the Regiment then devolved on Lieutenant-Colonel Sir William Miles, who was appointed Colonel on the 8th August, 1843. He resigned in 1866. The History of the Regiment was published in 1850. In 1854, 342 men out of 398 volunteered their services "to do military duty in any part of the U.K. at such time and for such period as may be required by Government." This was at the time of the Crimean War.

**NUNNEY**—1803. A company of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of 85 privates. The officers in 1804 were : Captain John Payne, 1st Lieutenant Levi Whitcombe, 2nd Lieutenant Robert Candy, and Ensign Robert Miles. The company was attached to the East Mendip Regiment of Volunteer Cavalry, and was disbanded on the 30th September, 1826.

**PITMINSTER**—1798. A company of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of 60 privates. In 1799 the officers were : Captain Thomas Southwood, Lieutenant Simon Billett, and Ensign Robert Daw. The company was disbanded in 1802.

**POLDEN HILL**—1803. The Polden Hill Regiment of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of eight companies of 60 privates each, claimed to have been the first Regiment at this time "to be sworn and enrolled." It was commanded by Colonel Henry Bull Strangways. The other officers in 1803 were : Lieutenant-Colonel William Gould, Major George Henry Templar, Adjutant-Captain Charles Browne, Quartermaster Richard Doidge, Surgeon Joseph Barker, Chaplain Rev. Thomas Hobbs ; Captains Robert Tucker, James Dawbin, Shuckborough How, John Tucker, Francis Clarke, William Greenhill, and Samuel Reynolds ; Lieutenants Nathaniel Harding, Joseph Parker, William Lovell, Robert Phippen, John Carver, John Trutch, John Parker, and John Perran ; Ensigns Thomas Jones, John Collins, Walter West, junr., John Dawbin, John King, Thomas Parker, and Thomas Windsor. The regiment transferred to the Local Militia in 1808.

PURITON—1831. Puriton raised a troop of Yeomanry during the time the country was agitated by the Reform Riots. It was commanded by Captain Benjamin Cuff Greenhill, and formed part of the Taunton Corps (q.v.).

QUEEN CAMEL—1803. The Queen Camel Corps of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of three companies of 60 men each, was accepted on the 22nd August. The officers appointed in 1803 were : Captains Robert Jey and Philip Main ; Lieutenants Thomas Caines, Richard Sealy and Stewell Marshall ; and Ensigns Robert Sealy, James Sealy and Abel Willis. In December, 1803, the corps was attached to the Yeovil Sub-Division Regiment (q.v.).

QUEEN CHARLTON—1857. A Queen Charlton Troop, apparently raised in 1857, was added to the North Somerset Yeomanry Cavalry, increasing the number of troops to nine.

ROAD AND WOOLVERTON—1798. A troop of Volunteer Cavalry. The officers were : Captain Thomas W. Ledyard, Lieutenant John Paish, and Cornet Thomas Whitaker Noad. Disbanded in 1802.

ROBOROUGH—1803. The “ Roborough or Hill Company ” of the East Mendip Legion (q.v.) was commanded by Captain William Swymmer, and the other officers were Lieutenant George Day and Ensign Joshua Day.

RODNEY STOKE—1803. A company of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of 70 privates. The first officers to be appointed were : Captain Thomas Star, Lieutenant John Chapman, and Ensign George Chapman. John Chapman resigned almost immediately, however, and in December, 1803, James Hardwick was appointed Lieutenant in his place. The company was disbanded on the 28th November, 1809.

SELWOOD FOREST LEGION—1803. This title was given to the combined Frome Volunteer Cavalry and Infantry, and the Beckington Volunteer Infantry. The Legion was dissolved in February, 1804.

SHAPWICK—1803. “ The Shapwick Regiment of Volunteer Infantry ” was a title given in error in official records to the Polden Hill Regiment (q.v.).

SHEPTON MALLET—1798. An Infantry Association, consisting of two companies. The officers were : 1st Company, Captain William Purlewent, Lieutenant Richard Leir, and Ensign

Thomas Green ; 2nd Company, Captain J. Penfold Westley, Lieutenant John Brown, and Ensign Edward Moore. Disbanded in 1802.

1803. A troop of Volunteer Cavalry, raised here at this time, formed part of the East Mendip Regiment of Volunteer Cavalry. The officers appointed in 1803 were : Captain Francis Morgan, Lieutenant Chas. Webster, and Cornet William Maskell. This troop had ceased to exist by 1844.

**SOMERTON—1794.** The *Western Flying Post*, 9th June, 1794, states that the "Loyal Fencible Corps of Somerton Volunteers," consisting of one company of 50 privates, was formed in February of that year. It was offered to the Government on the 3rd June, 1794. The officers first appointed were : Captain George Donisthorpe, 1st Lieutenant William Bridge, and 2nd Lieutenant Samuel Mogg. The company was disbanded in 1802.

1803. A corps of six companies, to which was added two companies at Langport to form the Somerton and Langport Regiment of Volunteer Infantry. The companies were raised at Somerton (2), Butleigh, Kingsdon, Long Sutton, Charlton, and Langport (2). The Regiment was commanded by Lieut.-Colonel John Frederick Pinney, the other regimental officers being Major Pyne, Lieutenant William Norman, Surgeon and Quartermaster John Turner. The officers of the Somerton Companies in 1803 were : 1st Company, Captain Pretor Pinney, 1st Lieutenant James Parsons, 2nd Lieutenant William Barrett ; 2nd Company, Captain Richard Welsh, 1st Lieutenant Cornish Barnard, and 2nd Lieutenant William Francis Norton. The other officers are given under the place names of companies. The Somerton and Langport Regiment transferred to the Local Militia in 1808.

**SOUTH BRENT—1803.** Raised a company of Volunteer Infantry which was attached to the West Mendip Legion (q.v.). The officers in February, 1804, were : Captain Gabriel Stone, Lieutenant Isaac Phelps, and Ensign George Durston. Transferred to Local Militia in 1809.

**SOUTH PETHERTON—1798.** Furnished a company of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of 60 privates. The officers were : Captain Richard Toller, Lieutenant John Baker Edmonds, and Ensign Stephen Bridge. Disbanded in 1802.

1803. A company of Volunteer Infantry of 100 privates. The officers appointed in 1803 were : Captain Richard Toller, 1st Lieutenant John Baker Edmonds, and 2nd Lieutenant John Nicholetts. In January, 1804, the company was attached to the Crewkerne Companies to form the Crewkerne and Petherton Corps.

**STON EASTON—1815.** On the 19th May, 1815, the Ston Easton Troop of the North Somerset Yeomanry was authorised to be raised. In 1817 the officers of the troop were : Captain John Eyre Salmon and Lieutenant Farnham Flower. Both were appointed to their respective ranks on 1st August, 1815.

**STOWEY—1803.** The Stowey Troop of the West Somerset Yeomanry was raised in 1803. It was commanded by Captain John Sweeting, the other officers in 1803 being Lieutenant Langley Gravenor and Cornet George Salter.

**SUTTON MONTIS—1803.** A company of Volunteer Infantry of 60 privates. It was commanded by Captain James Leach, and was attached to the Western Battalion of the 1st East Somerset Regiment of Volunteer Infantry (q.v.).

**TAUNTON—1794.** On the 23rd April the inhabitants of Taunton met, under the chairmanship of Mr. S. Franklin, and resolved to raise a corps of Volunteer Infantry. The services of the corps were accepted by the Government on the 7th May. The corps consisted of three companies, with officers appointed on the 21st June, 1794, as follows : *1st Company*, Major-Commandant William Corfield and Lieutenant Prockter Thomas ; *2nd Company*, Captain William Blundell and Lieutenant John Clitsome ; *3rd Company*, Captain John Whitmash and Lieutenant John Pinchard. On the 21st August, 1794, Richard Cave was appointed Adjutant in succession to Francis Dovey, deceased. Ensigns Charles Pool, Isaac Badcock and Robert Buncombe were appointed on 17th April, 1795. John Whitmash was the Major-Commandant in 1798, and when he died on 4th May, 1801, Charles Smith was appointed to command the corps. The “Taunton Loyal Volunteers,” as they were called, were disbanded on 26th May, 1802.

In the printed War Office lists of officers at the British Museum the name of Captain John Hanning, who raised No. 2 Troop of Somerset Yeomanry in 1794, appears under the

heading of Taunton. Taunton is also mentioned as the place where Captain Hanning raised his troop in the Warrant which authorises the issue of arms. There is very little information about this particular troop, which appears to have formed part of the East Somerset Yeomanry in 1798. Soon after Captain Hanning's troop was formed, John Tyndale Warre also raised sufficient men in Taunton for a troop. This troop was accepted by the County Committee on the 13th January, 1795, but Captain Warre's appointment to a commission is dated 12th September, 1794. The other officers of this troop were Lieutenant Robert M'Ghie and Cornet John Jeans. The Rev. Aaron Forster was appointed Chaplain on the 17th May, 1796. In 1798 the troop was added to the East Somerset Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry, greatly to the annoyance of Lord Somerville, who had offered to incorporate it in the West Somerset Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry. In 1799, Captain Warre raised a second troop, which was also added to the East Somerset Regiment. It was commanded by Robert M'Ghie, who was promoted to the rank of Captain. This second troop was disbanded in April, 1808. The first troop continued to form part of the East Somerset Regiment down to 1828, when the Regiment was dissolved. The Taunton Troop then entered upon a period of independent existence. In 1831 it was amalgamated with the Kingston and Puriton Troops, and became the Taunton Corps of Yeomanry Cavalry. The officers were : Major Edward Coles ; Captains Thomas G. Warrington Carew and Benjamin Cuff Greenhill ; Lieutenants W. Beadon and E. Sweeting ; Cornets P. H. Rodber, Thomas Millikin Mills and John Rogers. This corps was disbanded in 1843. In 1858 we find a Taunton Troop forming part of the West Somerset Yeomanry, being commanded by Captain C. N. Welman.

1803. A company of Volunteer Infantry was formed, and was known as the "Taunton Rifle Company." The officers appointed in 1803 were Captain Richardson Harrison, 1st Lieutenant Isaac Badcock and 2nd Lieutenant William Kinglake. The company appears to have been disbanded in 1812.

TWERTON—1803. An Infantry Company of 100 rank and file was raised at Twerton. It formed part of the Bath Forum Regiment.

**WATCHET—1799.** The Order Book of the West Somerset Yeomanry mentions a “Watchet Division” in September, 1799. This division does not appear to have developed into a troop.

**WEDMORE—1803.** A company of Volunteer Infantry was raised here, which formed part of the West Mendip Legion. The officers in 1804 were: Captain William Counsell, Lieutenant William Giles, and Ensign Joseph Counsell. Became Local Militia in 1809.

**WELLINGTON—1796.** A troop of Yeomanry Cavalry, which was attached to Lord Somerville’s Milverton Corps. The names of the officers are given in Chapter II.

1798. Wellington at this time raised a company of Volunteer Infantry. It was disbanded on the 4th June, 1802. The officers were: Captain William Jones, Lieutenant Andrew Holman, and 2nd Lieutenant Frederick White.

**WELLS—1794.** Wells supplied a company of Volunteer Infantry at this time. The officers were: Captain Peter Sherston, 1st Lieutenant Edward Tuson, and 2nd Lieutenant Shuckburg How. The company was disbanded in 1802.\*

1803. A Wells Military Association, consisting of one troop of Volunteer Cavalry of 50 privates, and two companies of Volunteer Infantry of 120 privates each. The officers of the troop were: Captain Edward Tuson, Lieutenant John Paine Tudway, and Ensign John Golding. This unit continued to exist after 1814 as an independent troop of Yeomanry Cavalry. In 1820 its strength was augmented to 65 privates. In 1825 the officers were: Captain John Paine Tudway, Lieutenant Thomas Robins, and Cornet Robert Charles Tudway. Between this time and 1831 the troop was disbanded, but owing to the disturbed state of the country in the latter year the formation of another troop was proposed. Whether it materialised or not we have not been able to discover, but in 1844 there was a Wells Troop of the North Somerset Yeomanry. The two Infantry Companies formed in 1803 were officered as follows: 1st Company, Captain Simon Davidge Witherell, 1st Lieutenant George Rich, 2nd Lieutenant John Conway, and Ensign John Lloyd; 2nd Company, Captain Daniel Beaumont Payne, 1st Lieutenant William Parfit, 2nd Lieutenant Joseph Coles, and

\* *Western Flying Post*, 2nd June, 1794.

Ensign George Lax, junior. In November, 1803, both companies were amalgamated with West Pennard and Bruton Volunteers to form the 2nd East Somerset Regiment of Volunteer Infantry (q.v.).

**WEST MENDIP LEGION—1803.** The West Mendip Legion consisted of twelve companies of Volunteer Infantry of 70 men each. They were raised at Winscombe (2), East Brent, South Brent, Cheddar, Hutton, Worle, Wedmore, Huntspill, Burnham, Axbridge, and Mark. The officers in February, 1804, were : Colonel-Commandant Francis Edward Whalley, Lieutenant-Colonel John Powlden, Major William D. Phillott, Paymaster Samuel S. Tripp, Adjutant-Captain Edward James, Surgeon John Colmer, Quartermaster Solomon Trew, and Chaplain the Rev. Boyle Sullivan ; Captain Thomas Dean, Lieutenant George Saunders, and Ensign John Simes ; Captain Samuel Birch, Lieutenant Henry Star, and Ensign James Keel ; Captain Thomas Athay, Lieutenant William White, and Ensign Benjamin Tiley ; Captain John Dean and Lieutenant Arthur Hicks ; Captain Richard Gilling, Lieutenant Joseph Clarke, and Ensign John Symon ; Captain John Good and Lieutenant George Hains ; Captain James Parker, Lieutenant Solomon Pain, and Ensign Thomas Hughes ; Captain Gabriel Stone, Lieutenant Isaac Phelps, and Ensign George Durston ; Captain James Harden, Lieutenant John Allen, and Ensign John Carde ; Captain William Counsell, Lieutenant William Giles, and Ensign Joseph Counsell ; Captain William Purnell Hasel, Lieutenant Edward Vowles, and Lieutenant Samuel Somner Tripp. Colonel Whalley was succeeded in the command of the Regiment by Colonel Jos. Rogers. In 1809 the Regiment transferred to the Local Militia.

**WEST PENNARD—1803.** Raised one company of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of 70 privates. The officers in 1803 were : Captain Edward Townsend, Lieutenant Burgess, and Ensign William Read. In November, 1803, it was amalgamated with Wells and Bruton Companies to form the 2nd East Somerset Regiment of Volunteer Infantry (q.v.).

**WEST SOMERSET REGIMENT OF VOLUNTEER INFANTRY—1803.** On the 8th September, 1803, John Acland, Esq., was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel-Commandant,\* but we have not been able

\* *Western Flying Post*, 31st October, 1803.

to discover the names of any other officers. It is assumed it was intended that the Crowcombe, Dodington and other West Somerset units, which were disbanded in 1802, should be revived and amalgamated under this title. The unit never materialised, for on the 27th October, 1803, Lord Poulett reported that "Mr. Acland had failed in accomplishing his proposal to form the West Somerset Battalion of Volunteer Infantry of 480 men."

#### WEST SOMERSET REGIMENT OF GENTLEMEN AND YEOMANRY CAVALRY

—1798. This was the title given in 1798 to the amalgamated Milverton, Wellington, and Brymore Troops. The Langport Troop was added in 1799. Major Lord Somerville was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel to command the Regiment, and Captain Sir Phillip Hales was promoted Major. On the 1st February, 1803, Lord Somerville resigned the command of the Regiment, and was succeeded by Henry George, Lord Porchester. In 1803 Lord Porchester recommended that a corps of sharpshooters should be raised, twelve to be attached to each troop. We have discovered nothing which shows that this recommendation was approved. Lord Porchester succeeded his father as 2nd Earl of Carnarvon in 1811. In 1804 the Regiment consisted of eight troops of 60 privates each, which were raised at Wiveliscombe (Captain John Brickdale), Stowey (Captain John Sweeting), Dunster (Captain T. Buckler Lethbridge), Dulverton (Captain George Pippen), Milverton (Captain William Barry Wade), Langport (Captain John Warren), Wellington (Captain Richard Barron Bellett), and Bridgwater (Lieutenant-Colonel C. K. K. Tynte). In 1814 the Regiment was reduced in strength to 50 privates per troop, but was increased to 60 each in 1818. The field officers of the Regiment in 1825 were: Colonel H. G. Earl of Carnarvon, Lieutenant-Colonel Chas. Kemys-Tynte, and Major Henry John George, Lord Porchester. Lieutenant-Colonel Chas. Kemys-Tynte succeeded Lord Carnarvon as Colonel of the Regiment on 11th July, 1831. Colonel Tynte was followed in the command on 24th January, 1854, by the Hon. W. H. B. Portman. In 1858 the field officers were: Colonel the Hon. W. H. B. Portman, Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick Wyndham Slade, and Major Augustus Pulsford Browne. This Regiment, tracing its origin in the Milverton Corps formed in 1794, could

boast of 126 years of unbroken service at the time of its conversion into Royal Field Artillery in 1920.

**WINCANTON**—1797. A troop of Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry was raised on the 4th February by Richard Messiter, who paid all the expenses of the unit. In 1798 it was amalgamated with the Castle Cary, Yeovil, Taunton, and Martock Troops to form the East Somerset Regiment of Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry (q.v.). In 1803 we find it commanded by Captain George Messiter, but in the year following Uriah Messiter was Captain of the troop and Thomas Lyddon Surasse was appointed Cornet. This unit was probably disbanded in 1828, but in 1830 it was revived and attached to the North Somerset Yeomanry. The troop was then commanded by J. Bailward.

1803. In the Home Office correspondence it is stated that three companies of Volunteer Infantry, consisting of 100 privates each, were accepted on the 22nd August, 1803, but in the Muster Roll of the 1st East Somerset Regiment of Volunteer Infantry there are only two Wincanton companies, and the establishment allowed in each case was 70 privates. These two companies were commanded by Captains Robert Gapper and William Webb. (See 1st East Somerset Regiment of Volunteer Infantry.)

**WINSCOMBE**—1803. Furnished two companies of Volunteer Infantry, which formed part of the West Mendip Legion (q.v.).

**WIVELISCOMBE**—1798. A company of Volunteer Infantry. The officers were : Captain Lacy Lea, Lieutenant Philip Lovell, and Ensign Thomas Lyddon Surasse. This company was disbanded in 1802.

1799. In this year we find a Wiveliscombe Troop of the West Somerset Regiment of Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry first mentioned.

1803. Raised one company of Volunteer Infantry of 120 privates. The officers in 1803 were : Captain Lacy Lea, Lieutenants John Harvey and Richard Cross, and Ensign Philip Hancock. The company was an independent one, and was disbanded in 1809.

**WOOLVERTON**—1798. Is associated with Road (q.v.) in the formation of a troop of Volunteer Cavalry.

**WORLE**—1803. Contributed a company of Volunteer Infantry to the West Mendip Legion (q.v.).

**WRAXALL**—1804. (See Farley).

**WRINGTON**—1798. A troop of Volunteer Cavalry was raised here at this time, but we have not been able to discover the names of the officers. Probably disbanded in 1802.

1803. Wrinton raised a company of Volunteer Infantry, which formed part of the East Mendip Legion. In this case also we have failed to find the names of the officers.

**YARLINGTON**—1803. A company of Volunteer Infantry, which formed part of the 1st East Somerset Regiment of Volunteer Infantry (q.v.).

**YATTON**—1803. Raised a company of Volunteer Infantry. The officers in 1803 were : Captain John Smith, Lieutenant William Wilkins, and Ensign John Hammonds. The company formed part of the East Mendip Legion (q.v.).

**YEOVIL**—1794. A troop of Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry. The officers in 1796 were : Captain Samuel Daniel, Lieutenant William Lambert White, and Cornet Henry Whitmarsh. This was No. 4 Troop, and was accepted by the County Committee on the 30th July, 1794. In 1798 the troop was amalgamated with the Castle Cary and other troops to form the East Somerset Regiment of Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry. It was disbanded in 1828.

1803. The Yeovil Sub-division Regiment of Volunteer Infantry consisted of eight companies of 60 privates each. The officers first appointed to the Regiment were : Colonel The Hon. Thomas Fane, Lieutenant-Colonel Matthew Quantock, Major William Cole Wood ; Captains Thomas Ham, George Tuson, James Daniel, Peter Daniel, and William Wilson ; Lieutenants John Rendall, Neast G. Prideaux, Henry Slade, Henry Penny, Lyte Poole, Joseph Fowler, and James Winter ; Ensigns Theophilus Bartlett, Samuel Forward, George Templeman, John Sharland, William Poole, and Thomas Chaffey ; Chaplain Rev. Elias Taylor. On 29th September, 1803, John Pyne was appointed Lieutenant ; Ensign William Poole was promoted Lieutenant in the place of Lyte Poole, resigned ; Robert Cary and John Clark were appointed Ensigns, and

Jeremiah Penny was appointed Ensign *vice* William Poole, promoted. In December, 1804, the Regiment was increased to ten companies by the attachment of the Queen Camel Corps. Apparently the Queen Camel Corps consisted of only two companies at this time. The Regiment was disbanded in 1808.

In addition to the foregoing the following County Regiments were raised :—

**SOMERSET REGIMENT OF FENCIBLE CAVALRY—1794.** This Regiment was raised mainly through the exertions of John Strode, who became the Lieutenant-Colonel. The unit was at Taunton in July, 1794, and moved to Barham Camp in June, 1795. In 1799 it was stationed at Sheffield. We presume it was disbanded in 1800, about the same time as the Provisional Cavalry.

The officers first appointed were : Colonel Earl Poulett, Lieut.-Colonel John Strode, Major John Berkeley Burland ; Captains John Raw Collins, John Lethbridge, Peter Bluett, and W. Henry Newton ; Captain-Lieutenant George Wade ; Lieutenants William Roberts, William Hanning, Richard Coombes, H. Powell Collins, N. T. Kingsley, and Joseph Champion ; Cornets Charles Hutchings Lewis, Nathaniel French, Henry Dupont, W. V. Palmer, and Charles Staples ; Adjutant William Roberts ; Surgeon John Greenhead, and Chaplain William Tudor. In 1797 Major J. B. Burland resigned to take command of the Provisional Cavalry, and Captain W. H. Newton was given his Majority. In the following year Lieut.-Colonel John Strode appears to have resigned, and Major Newton was promoted in his place, Captain J. R. Collins being promoted Major.

**SOMERSET REGIMENT OF FENCIBLE INFANTRY—1794.** It is believed that the Fencible Infantry Regiment was raised mainly in West Somerset. It was stationed at Jersey, and later went to Ireland. The Regiment was disbanded in 1802. The officers in 1796 were : Colonel William Frederick Forster, Lieut.-Colonel Thomas Fownes Luttrell, Major Hugh Antrobus ; Captains Richard Tattam, John Sandy, John Kernan, Edward Mockler, Benjamin Chapman, Charles Lord, Harman Jones, and Francis Henry Forster ; Lieutenants Richard Hawke, Robert Roe, Richard Dudley, William Millington, Randall Kernan, Henry Sweeting, Samuel Forster, Samuel Hopkins, James Flood,

Thomas Edwards, John McPhail, John Horne, Walter Pearse, Thomas Gaynor, Patrick Dowdall, Henry Mockler, J. Castle, and Thomas Hall ; Ensigns Henry Thompson, Henry Lewis Sweeting, Robert Gillmour, J. Cunningham, William Cooke, John Thompson, Charles Forrest, James Chapman, Forster Hall, Henry Grove, Josias William Taylor, and James Pipon. The Adjutant was Henry Sweeting, Quartermaster Sacheveral Harwood, Chaplain Edward Crosse, Surgeon William Millington, and Surgeon's Mate Henry Thompson.

SOMERSET REGIMENT OF PROVISIONAL CAVALRY—1798. When first raised this unit was really Militia Cavalry. It was so unpopular, however, that it was turned into a Regiment of Fencible Cavalry in 1799, and was given the title, “ 2nd Somerset Regiment of Fencible Cavalry.” The men who were originally enrolled by ballot were asked to transfer voluntarily. The Regiment was disbanded on the 1st April, 1800. The officers of the *Colonel's Troop* were : Colonel John Berkeley Burland, Captain-Lieutenant John Sweeting, and Cornet John Crosse ; the *Lieutenant-Colonel's Troop*, Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Samuel Joliffe, Lieutenant Richard Chapman, and Cornet George Squires ; *Major Balch's Troop*, Major Robert Everard Balch, Lieutenant Henry Faugoin, and Cornet Francis Jefferys ; *Major Rodbard's Troop*, Major Samuel Rodbard, Lieutenant Henry Edwards, and Cornet Thomas Bidwell ; *Captain Godfrey's Troop*, Captain John Godfrey, Lieutenant Charles Anderdon, and Cornet Thomas Hooper ; *Captain Rawlins' Troop*, Captain John Rawlins, Lieutenant John Gapper or Galpin, and Cornet Thomas Balne ; *Captain Brickdale's Troop*, Captain John Brickdale and Lieutenant Richard Crosse ; *Captain Lewis' Troop*, Captain Charles Hutchings Lewis and Lieutenant Charles Best. The Adjutant was Henry Faugoin, Quartermaster Thomas Goodson, Paymaster John Crosse, Surgeon Charles Anderdon, and Assistant-Surgeon Francis Jefferys.

## PART II. (1859-1908).

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE RIFLE VOLUNTEERS OF 1859.

**I**T seems to be the general impression that the Volunteers of 1859 were raised as a direct consequence of a threat of invasion by Napoleon III. As a matter of fact, little progress was made until the danger of invasion was past.

The strained relations between England and France only stimulated and made fruitful an agitation which had been going on for many years. As early as 1837 Captain Hans Busk is said to have agitated for the formation of Rifle Volunteers. With the aid and influence of Major-General The Duke of Wellington, son of the "Iron Duke," he succeeded in 1853 in getting a shooting club recognised as a Volunteer Rifle Corps. This Corps became known as the Victoria Rifle Volunteer Corps, and the Duke of Wellington became its Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant (4th Aug., 1853).

Before this, however, Dr. Bucknill, who may have been a disciple of Captain Busk, raised in Exeter a body of Rifle Volunteers which became known as the Exeter and South Devon Rifle Volunteer Corps. Its services were accepted by the Queen in 1852, and on 6th October, the same year, the members paraded in their uniforms for the first time and took the oath of allegiance.\*

It is in these two units that we see the beginning of the Volunteer Force which existed until 1908. They maintained a solitary and, at times, precarious existence until 1859, when the Volunteer Force was extended and recognised as the Army of Defence.

The attempt of Count Felice Orsini, on the 14th January, 1858, to assassinate Napoleon III. was planned in London, and this led the French Emperor to demand the surrender of Orsini's accomplices who were living in England. The Law of England did not permit this, and popular opinion was also against Napoleon. The

\* See *Notes and Queries*, Vol. 3, 7th Series, p. 356.

French people were roused to anger, and the military chiefs demanded that England should be invaded.

The British Army was then, as now, inferior in numbers to the French Army ; the Militia was not ready for war ; and in order to increase the Defensive Forces it was decided to expand the very small Volunteer Force represented by the Exeter and South Devon and the Victoria Rifle Corps. As was usual in times of danger the wish was expressed that the Volunteers had been active and trained when the fear of invasion arose, instead of having to be enrolled and trained when invasion was imminent.

The conditions under which men could join the Volunteers were not attractive. These conditions, together with the fact that they were drawn up mainly with the view to " induce those classes to come forward who do not enter either the Regular Army or Militia," were the chief reasons why the movement did not progress with any great rapidity.

At first, every Volunteer had to provide his own uniform, which cost from £2 to £2 10s. ; also a rifle which would admit a .377 in. plug but not a .380 in. one, which entailed further expenditure of upwards of £5. In addition, the Corps had to purchase its targets, ammunition and percussion caps from the Government in addition to paying the wages of an instructor and the rent of headquarters with storerooms, etc. To cover these expenses each member of a Corps was required to pay an annual subscription, usually £1.

There were few who would undertake all this expense, and in order to raise corps it was found necessary to solicit subscriptions from the public for the purpose of clothing and equipping those willing to join but unable to meet the expenditure. To help further to this end Volunteers were, as a rule, divided into three classes : (1) " effectives," who would clothe and arm themselves ; (2) " effectives," who could not afford to do so ; and (3) " non-effectives," or honorary members, who paid an entrance fee of £5 and an annual subscription.\*

Towards the end of 1859 the Government undertook to provide the rifles and issue targets, ammunition, etc., at cost price. The Militia Staff Sergeants were also permitted to instruct Volunteers

\* The Langport Vols. were divided into four classes, namely : (1) Those willing to equip themselves, (2) those willing to pay 50s. towards outfit, (3) those willing to pay 20s., and (4) those willing to join if uniform was provided. (*Taunton Courier*, Jan. 25th, 1860.)

for 1s. per drill and 4d. billet allowance. It is a curious paradox that these concessions were made when all danger of invasion was past. Nevertheless, they brought about the formation of many Corps which would not otherwise have been brought into existence.

Perhaps the first attempt to raise a Corps in Somerset was the resolution of the St. Decumen's Cricket Club, of Williton, to form a Corps amongst its members. This decision was made towards the end of May, 1859, on the suggestion of Sir A. Hood, M.P.\* It did not receive much support at first, and it was not until November, 1859, that a small Corps of 30 was actually established at Williton.

In Bath the movement met with greater success, as might be expected. A public meeting was held at the Guildhall on the 1st June, when it was resolved : "That an Association be formed, to be called 'The Bath Volunteer Corps,' and that an offer of its services, for the object stated in the circular issued by the Secretary at War, be made to Her Majesty's Government through the Lord-Lieutenant of the County of Somerset."† It was hoped to raise a Regiment, but for a time Bath had to be content with two Corps, which were styled the 1st (Bath) and 2nd (Bathwick) Somerset Rifle Volunteer Corps. In 1860, when the Volunteer Force was getting more popular, these two Corps generally assisted in the raising of two Bath Artizan Corps, composed entirely of men who could not equip themselves. These two Artizan Corps were the 17th (Lyncombe) and 18th (Walcot) Rifle Volunteers.

Taunton quickly followed Bath. A defunct Rifle Club was revived by old members, and new members were enrolled with the object of developing into a Rifle Corps. This object was consummated at a crowded public meeting held at the Guildhall, Taunton, on the 12th July, when it was decided to form a Rifle Volunteer Corps to consist of persons of 16 years and upwards, resident in Taunton or within twenty miles thereof‡. The Unit became known as the 3rd (Taunton) Somerset Rifle Volunteer Corps.

Attempts were made to raise other Corps in different parts of the county, but the men generally were apathetic. Public meetings were held, but were thinly attended. Many keen prospective Volunteers became disheartened.

\* *Taunton Courier*, 1st June, 1859.

† *Supplement to Bath Chronicle*, 2nd June, 1859.

‡ *Taunton Courier*, 6th July, 1859.

We cannot help attributing this mainly to the lack of enterprise on the part of the Lord-Lieutenant. Had a meeting of Deputy-Lieutenants and magistrates been held to consider the circular letters issued to Lord-Lieutenants by the Secretary of State for War on the 12th and 25th May, as was done in other counties, some central body might have been formed to co-ordinate and stimulate the efforts of local authorities. It was demonstrated in 1794, and it is exemplified in the County Association of to-day, that in order to raise and maintain numerous uniform organisations in different parts of the county, a central body as a directing force is absolutely essential.

It was not until September that a meeting of Deputy-Lieutenants was held at the Shire Hall, Taunton. The Lord-Lieutenant was not present. The Hon. P. Pleydell Bouverie was asked to preside, but he only accepted the invitation on the understanding that he was not favourably inclined to Rifle Volunteers. The meeting was a tragic failure. Sir P. P. F. P. Acland, after a carefully considered speech, proposed, "That this meeting considers it most desirable to promote the formation of Volunteer Rifle Corps in the County of Somerset, under the provisions of the Act of Parliament of 44 Geo. III., cap. 34."\* The resolution was carried unanimously, and it seemed that something tangible would result from the meeting. But Sir Alexander Hood, M.P., in the course of a eulogy of the Rifle Volunteers, said : "The Yeomanry were very useful and excellent as police, but it is no use telling me they were soldiers, as everybody knew they were not. I do not believe they would be any good against a body of regular soldiers."†

Immediately a different atmosphere came over the meeting. Nearly all those present were either past or present officers of the Yeomanry, or were otherwise closely connected with the two Somerset Regiments. Such an unwarranted attack naturally roused their enmity to the Volunteer movement. The meeting broke up, having done nothing but erect a barrier of jealousy between two kindred forces.

So keenly was this felt in West Somerset that the West Somerset Yeomanry was augmented by a big influx of recruits as a direct result. And after Sir A. Hood and Sir P. P. F. P. Acland had

\* This, of course, should have been "44 Geo. III., Cap. 54."

† *Taunton Courier*, 14th Sept., 1859.

addressed meetings at Minehead, Williton, Watchet, Stogursey, and Nether Stowey, they were only able to get fifteen Volunteers from Watchet and Stogursey.

In spite of this set-back, however, there were places here and there where there was a desire to raise Rifle Volunteers, and by the end of the year Corps had been formed, or were about to be formed, at Yeovil, Crewkerne, Wells, Taunton, Wiveliscombe, Glastonbury, Wellington, Langport, Bath, Shepton Mallet, Burnham, Williton, Weston-super-Mare, and Bridgwater.

The Weston-super-Mare Rifle Volunteer Corps was raised in preference to an Artillery Corps. Those who favoured Artillery Volunteers, however, were satisfied when a strong corps of Artillery was raised in Weston-super-Mare in July, 1860. About the same time another corps was formed at Clevedon, and shortly afterwards Portishead provided another.\* In November, 1863, these Artillery Volunteers were brigaded with the Bristol, Gloucester and Newnham Corps, and were styled the 9th (Clevedon), 10th (Portishead), and 11th and 12th (Weston-super-Mare) Companies, 1st Administrative Brigade, Gloucestershire R.G.A. Volunteers.

Engineer Companies were also raised later, and were amalgamated with the Devonshire and Gloucestershire Companies to form the 1st (Western Counties) Gloucestershire Engineer Volunteer Corps.

The Rifle Volunteer Corps was intended to be self-contained, and a unit in itself. It could have an establishment of 30, 60, or 120 N.C.O.'s and privates. The officers appointed to a corps of 30 were one Lieutenant and one Ensign ; to a corps of 60, one Captain, one Lieutenant and one Ensign ; to a corps of 120, a Captain-Commandant, two Lieutenants and two Ensigns.

With so many small and widely distributed corps, the need of some central body to maintain uniformity in drill, etc., soon became manifest. The Rifle Volunteer Corps were therefore grouped into Administrative Battalions. The corps retained their individuality, but their training was supervised by the Battalion Staff. In 1882 the Corps were consolidated into Battalions, which assumed the titles 1st, 2nd or 3rd Volunteer Battalion Somerset Light Infantry.†

\* *Taunton Courier*, 8th August, 1860.

† The 1st Ad. Batt. was the first in England to assume the title of the County Regiment. Colonel Skrine, in *The Book of the Volunteer Bazaar*, 1887.

In Somerset there were three Administrative Battalions. The first was centred in Bath, and embraced the 1st, 2nd, 7th, 14th, 18th, and 22nd Corps. The headquarters of the 2nd Administrative Battalion was at Taunton, and comprised the 3rd, 5th, 8th, 9th, 11th, 12th, 16th, 20th, 21st, and 26th Corps. The 3rd Administrative Battalion for many years had its headquarters at Wells, and included the 4th, 6th, 10th, 13th, 15th, 19th, 23rd, 24th, 25th, and 27th Corps. In 188— the headquarters of this Battalion was moved to Weston-super-Mare.

In 1863 the Volunteer Act (26 and 27 Vic., c. 65) was passed. It repealed the Volunteer Act of 1804 (44 Geo. III., c. 54) so far as it referred to the Volunteers, but not the Yeomanry. The 1863 Act embraced most of the provisions of the 1804 Act relating to discipline, enrolment and discharge of Volunteers, and the appointment of officers. It enabled Her Majesty to constitute a permanent staff consisting of an Adjutant and as many Sergeant-Instructors as might be required.

Under the Act the Volunteers were liable to be called out for actual military service in case of actual or anticipated invasion of any part of the United Kingdom. But the need for calling them out was first to be communicated to both Houses of Parliament, if sitting, or declared in Council and notified by Proclamation, if Parliament was not sitting. Before a Volunteer Corps could be released from actual military service it was to be returned to the county to which it belonged.

The most important provision of the Act, however, was the grant of an allowance—known as the “Capitation Grant”—of 30s. per annum for every Volunteer returned as efficient. This grant was sufficient to cover the cost of uniform, spread over several years, and most of the other expenses of the Corps. The result was that enrolment in the Volunteers was no longer restricted to the comparatively well-to-do, and it enabled many keen, but poor, men to join.

The history of the Rifle Volunteers is singularly uneventful. Until we come to the South African War nothing happened of an exciting nature except the Reviews of 1860 and 1868, and the annual rifle shooting meetings at Wimbledon from 1860 to 1889, and at Bisley thereafter.

On the 23rd June, 1860, about 18,450 Volunteers were reviewed in Hyde Park by Queen Victoria, and she reviewed 26,953 in

Windsor Park on 20th June, 1868. On both occasions the Somerset Rifle Volunteers were represented.

The three Somerset Administrative Battalions were first reviewed together in Kelston Park, Bath, by Lord Portman, the Lord-Lieutenant, on 30th July, 1861. The 1st Administrative Battalion was under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Inigo W. Jones. The 2nd Administrative Battalion was under the command of Lieut.-Colonel G. T. Graham. The 12th (Wiveliscombe) and 26th (Bridgwater) Corps of this Battalion were not present. The 3rd Administrative Battalion, under Lieut.-Colonel Henry A. F. Luttrell, was also without two corps, the 25th (Baltonsborough) and 26th (Langford). It is possible that these two and the 26th (Bridgwater) Corps were not sufficiently trained to attend a review, for they were only raised in the early part of the year.

In 1887 the 1st Volunteer Battalion Somerset L.I. organised a Grand Volunteer Bazaar in Bath for the purpose of raising a Drill Hall Fund. The object of the fund was to erect a Drill Hall, Orderly Room, Armoury, and Reading Room at the old Militia Barracks in Lower Bristol Road, Bath, which formed the headquarters of the Battalion. The Bazaar continued from the 19th to the 23rd April under the patronage of Her Majesty the Queen, and was an unqualified success. "The Book of the Grand Volunteer Bazaar" was issued in connection with it, and contained a history of the Battalion (1860-1887), and particulars of each Company, written by Lieut.-Colonel H. M. Skrine.

It is interesting to note how history repeats itself. The Volunteers of the Napoleonic period always contended that because they were allowed to choose their own officers when first formed, the right of nominating subsequent officers was vested in them. The same trouble occurred in 1859 and 1860. It was only by a majority of one that the Taunton Corps agreed to the affairs of the unit being vested in the Captain. In 1860, it is said that the 2nd (Weston-super-Mare) Artillery Volunteers threatened to break up unless the Captain resigned in favour of his 1st Lieutenant and accept the lower rank. The Captain did so. There was also considerable unpleasantness in the 17th (Lyncombe) Corps when the Captain refused to accede to the petition of 67 members of the Corps that he should appoint a Mr. C. Milsom as Lieutenant of the Corps. The reason he gave was that Mr. Milsom was a tradesman. The difficulty was bridged by the former Lieutenant withdrawing

his resignation and continuing his Volunteer duties. All these disputes could have been settled by reference to the Volunteer Act of 1804. They were also provided for in the Act of 1863.

Discipline in the Volunteer Force could not, of course, be maintained at the high standard observed in the Regular Army. The slack discipline of the Volunteers has often been condemned, but it must be remembered that many men undertook service in the Volunteers from a sense of public duty and at no little personal sacrifice. Others took it up as a hobby with which to occupy some of their leisure hours. To interest a man in a hobby for any length of time it must be made attractive. Stern discipline is never attractive. There were other reasons, looking at it from the lighter side, why strict discipline was not always easy to enforce. Consider the position of the Sergeant who, during camp, had occasion to remonstrate with one of his men for always appearing late on parade. The man made some surly reply. "If you say any more I'll have you arrested," said the Sergeant. "If you do," replied the man, who happened to be the Sergeant's landlord, "I'll raise your rent."

The following is a list of Corps raised in Somerset, and the names of the officers first appointed, so far as we have been able to trace :—\*

- 1st (Bath) R.V.C.—Captain John Randle Ford, Lieut. Thos. F. Inman, and Ensign Thos. Wm. Airey.
- 2nd (Bathwick) R.V.C.—Captain E. F. Anstey, Lieut. Hen. Holland Burne, and Ensign Wm. Attfield.
- 3rd (Taunton) R.V.C.—Captain W. Ayshford Sanford, Lieut. Arthur Allen, and Ensign Richd. Easton.
- 4th (Burnham) R.V.C.—Captain Allen, Lieut. Joseph Allen, and Ensign Barkley.
- 5th (Bridgwater) R.V.C.†—Captain G. S. Poole, Lieut. C. B. Bate, and Ensign W. J. Ford.
- 6th (Weston-super-Mare) R.V.C.—Captain J. Law, Lieut. D. E. Baker, and Ensign C. Whitting.

\* These names are obtained from various sources, mainly from muster rolls, the *Army List* for December, 1859, and local contemporary papers.

† There was a "Polden Hill Rifle Volunteer Corps," formed by Captain B. C. Greenhill, of Puriton. It was not officially recognised, and it is assumed to have amalgamated with Bridgwater.

7th (Keynsham) R.V.C.—Captain J. I. Clayfield Ireland, Lieut. C. J. Simmons, and Ensign H. Lyne.

8th (Wellington) R.V.C.—Captain Wm. Burridge, Lieut. W. Thomas, and Ensign F. S. Bridge.

9th (Williton) R.V.C.—Captain J. Halliday, Lieut. J. Blommart, and Ensign Gatchell.

10th (Wells) R.V.C.—Captain Edwin Lovell, Lieut. W. J. S. Foster, and Ensign W. C. Berryman.

11th (Stogursey) R.V.C.—Captain G. F. Luttrell, Lieut. R. G. Evered, and Ensign Robertson.

12th (Wiveliscombe) R.V.C.—Captain H. G. Moysey, Lieut. Richard Bere, and Ensign Benj. Boucher. Captain Moysey was succeeded in the command by Wm. Hancock, Esq., on 4th June, 1860.

13th (Frome) R.V.C.—Captain Jas. W. D. T. Wickham. In 1868 this Corps must have been over 120 strong, for Captain Wickham was Captain Commandant, and there were also the following officers: Lieut. Thos. Byard Winter Sheppard, Lieut. George Walters, and Ensigns Richard H. Harrold and Percy W. D. Cruttwell.

14th (Warleigh) R.V.C.\*—Captain E. Sawyer, Lieut. W. Sanderson, and Ensign E. M. Skrine.

15th (Shepton Mallet) R.V.C.—Captain Henry Ernst, Lieut. S. Craddock, and Ensign Joseph Allen.

16th (Yeovil) R.V.C.—Captain Thos. Messiter, Lieut. Donne, and Ensign Watts.

17th (Lyncombe) R.V.C.—Captain H. V. Hewitt, Lieut. G. J. Robertson, and Ensign J. S. Falkner.

18th (Walcot) R.V.C.—Captain Bryan H. Holme, Lieut. Arthur Warn Weston, and Ensign Robert Allen Cook.

19th (Glastonbury) R.V.C.†—Captain Ernst, Lieut. Lovell, and Ensign Craddock.

20th (Crewkerne) R.V.C.—Captain Matthews, Lieut. Tidcombe, and Ensign Jolliffe.

\* Also known as the "Avon Vale and Warleigh Manor Rifle Vols."

† The Glastonbury Corps was popularly known as the "Central Somerset Rifle Vol. Corps."

21st (Langport) R.V.C.—Captain Combe, Lieut. Stuckey, and Ensign Bagehot.

22nd (Temple Cloud) R.V.C.\*—Captain Naish, Lieut. Coates, and Ensign Mogg.

23rd (Castle Cary) R.V.C.—Captain T. W. Sanford, Lieut. T. E. Rogers, and Ensign Herbert Messiter.

24th (Somerton) R.V.C.—Captain Dickenson, Lieut. Tuson, and Ensign Frazer.

25th (Baltonsborough) R.V.C.—Lieut. Ebenezer Chaffey and Ensign Reginald Dickenson.

26th (Bridgwater) R.V.C.—Captain Henry Bridges.

27th (Langford) R.V.C.—Captain Nathaniel John Newman.

28th (?) R.V.C.—We have not been able to discover the place to which this Corps belonged.

The officers commanding the Administrative Battalions, which after 1882 became Volunteer Battalions of the Somerset L.I., were :

1st Ad. Battalion.	Lieut.-Colonel Inigo W. Jones (1860-1868).
	Lieut.-Colonel John Randle Ford† (1868-1883).
	Lieut.-Colonel H. M. Skrine (1883-1888).
	Lieut.-Colonel A. F. B. Wright (1888-1893).
	Lieut.-Colonel H. M. Skrine (1893-1898).
	Lieut.-Colonel H. F. Clutterbuck (1898-1908).
2nd Ad. Battalion.	Lieut.-Colonel Geo. Templar Graham (1860-1867).
	Lieut.-Colonel Geo. H. W. Carew (1867-?).
	Lieut.-Colonel C. J. W. Allen (?-1880).
	Lieut.-Col.-Comdt. H. B. Patton (1880-1895).
	Lieut.-Col.-Comdt. M. Locke Blake (1895-1904).
	Lieut.-Col.-Comdt. Wm. Marsh (1904-1908).
3rd Ad. Battalion.	Lieut.-Colonel Henry A. F. Luttrell (1860-1889).
	Lieut.-Colonel V. U. Langworthy (1889-1900).
	Lieut.-Colonel W. E. Perham (1900-1907).
	Lieut.-Colonel E. H. Openshaw (1907-1908).

\* This Corps was at first termed the "East Mendip Rifle Vol. Corps."

† According to Regimental Records, Lieut.-Colonel Ford actually took over command on 3rd June, 1869. He was promoted Lieut.-Colonel in 1868.

It is impossible to give the names of the officers of the Artillery and Engineers Corps as they are not shown under Corps but under Brigades in the Army Lists of the time.

As a result of the South African War, Stretcher Bearer Companies were raised in 1902 and attached to Volunteer Infantry Brigades. Detachments of the Bearer Company of the Gloucester and Somerset Volunteer Brigade were raised at Frome, Bath and Bridgwater.

On the 1st April, 1908, the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, 1907, came into force, and great changes were made in the organisation of the Somerset Volunteers, which thereafter became Territorials. These changes, however, must form the subject of a later chapter.

## CHAPTER II.

## TRAINING.

In the event of invasion the Rifle Volunteers were to be used in precisely the same manner as the Volunteers of 1803. They were to attach themselves to the flanks and lines of communication of the enemy and hinder him as much as possible. In the meantime the main Army, composed of Regulars and Militia, would be amassed with a view to dealing a crushing blow.\*

The Volunteers therefore needed to be good skirmishers, and particularly good shots. Their training was arranged with these ends in view.

To encourage rifle shooting, the National Rifle Association was formed in 1860. Its annual meetings, held at Wimbledon until 1889, and now at Bisley, drew together the finest shots in the British Empire. Under its ægis County Rifle Associations were organised. The Somerset Rifle Association was soon formed, and its first meeting was held in 1864.

There was always keen competition between the three Volunteer Battalions at the County Meetings. But it is natural that most interest was centred in Wimbledon and Bisley, and that blue riband of rifle shooting, the Queen's Prize, which from 1901 has been known as the King's Prize. Though the Somerset Rifle Volunteers are not conspicuous by the number of first prizes they won at the national meeting, it was rarely that they were not somewhere near the top. There are scarcely half-a-dozen instances in the history of the Queen's Prize when one or more Somerset Volunteers were not among the "Sixty" or "Hundred" qualified to compete in the final stage of the Competition.

The premier prize was only once won by a Somerset Volunteer. This signal event happened in 1868. Among the Sixty qualified for the final stage were Corpl. Bennett, 21st (Langport) Somerset Rifle Volunteers, who was third; Lieut. J. B. Carslake, 5th (Bridgwater) Somerset Rifle Volunteers, fourth; and, farther down

\* Para. 6 of the War Office Letter, 25th May, 1859.

the list, was Corporal Good, 4th (Burnham) Somerset Rifle Volunteers. In the final stage the highest score was actually made by Corporal Peake, of the 6th Lancashires, but he was disqualified for using a wrong type of wad. Lieutenant Carslake,\* who was second, was therefore declared the winner.

Bridgwater naturally gave him a magnificent reception on his return. His carriage, in which he was accompanied by his father (J. H. B. Carslake, Esq.), B.C. Greenhill, Esq., B. Greenhill, Esq., junior, and Captains Ford and Bridges, was taken through the town escorted by Yeomanry Cavalry. It was preceded by the Bridgwater and Stowey Troops of West Somerset Yeomanry, with swords drawn, and the 3rd (Taunton), 5th (Bridgwater) and 26th (Bridgwater) Corps. In rear of the carriage were a contingent of Royal Naval Reserve, and the various Bridgwater Friendly Societies.†

The next time the blue riband seemed likely to come to Somerset was in 1920, when Captain (now Major) E. C. B. Elliott, 374th (Somerset) Battery, R.F.A., won the Second Prize. Up to 1908 the competition next in importance to the "King's Prize" was the "Prince of Wales' Prize"; this was won in 1865 by Private Poole, 12th Somerset R.V.C. In the same year a Somerset team of ten Volunteers won the "China" Cup and £50. The "China" Cup again came to Somerset in 1868, but though the county team was several times second or third the Cup was never won a third time. The "St. George's" Competition was won in 1887 by Lieut. Hole, 2nd Volunteer Battalion Somerset L.I. Another classical competition won by a Somerset man was the "Queen Mary's," the first prize, consisting of a Gold Medal and £50, was won in 1912 by Corpl. B. H. D. Hurst, Wessex Royal Engineers.

There were numerous instances of Somerset men tieing for the first prize in other competitions, but the following were won without any question of re-firing or dividing the prizes:—

Doctor Ehrhardt's Competition : Won by Corpl. Bracher, 2nd Somerset R.V.C., in 1865.

Mr. Bass's Prize : Won by Pte. Hay, 1st Somerset R.V.C., in 1865.

\* Lieut. Carslake was a cousin of Colonel T. Foster Barham, of Elmwood, Bridgwater. He died at Birmingham on 13th June, 1923.

† *Somerset County Gazette*, 26th October, 1868.

“ Daily Telegraph ” Cup : Won by Ensign C. Green, 3rd Somerset R.V.C., in 1870.

“ Graphic ” Competition : Won by Corpl. Poole, 12th Somerset R.V.C., in 1870, and by Pte. Welch, 1st Somerset R.V.C., in 1875.

Licensed Victualler’s Competition : Won by Pte. Babbage, 9th Somerset R.V.C., in 1870.

Martin’s Challenge Cup : Won by Pte. Kennington, 1st Somerset R.V.C., in 1871, and by Sergt. Pitts, 2nd V.B. Somerset L.I., in 1902.

Curtis and Harvey Competition : Won in 1875 by Pte. Welch, 1st Somerset R.V.C.

Bland Competition : Won by Lieut. Louch, 2nd V.B. Somerset L.I., in 1885.

Gregory Competition : Won by Lieut. E. T. Alms, 2nd V.B. Somerset L.I., in 1888.

Robin Hood Competition : Won in 1893 by Pte. Howland, 1st V.B. Somerset L.I.

“ Duke of Cambridge ” Prize : Won by Pte. J. Cole, 4th Batt. Somerset L.I., in 1909.

Barlow Competition : Won by Major J. F. Keen, Wessex R.E., in 1912.

“ L.S.A.” Competition : Won by Corpl. B. H. D. Hurst, Wessex R.E., in 1912.

In 1906 the North Somerset Imperial Yeomanry won the “ Mounted Scouts (Service Rifle) ” Challenge and £50. Two years later the same Regiment won the “ Mander ” Challenge Cup, and was third in the following year.

The following list indicates the numerous occasions on which Somerset Volunteers and Territorials have been selected for national and other representative teams :—

1867—Pte. Sloper, 1st Som. R.V.C.—In English team competing for the International “ Enfield ” Trophy.

1868—Ensign J. M. Hay, 17th Som. R.V.C.—In Scottish team competing for the International “ Enfield ” Trophy.

1872—Pte. Board, 7th Som. R.V.C.—In English team competing for the International Challenge Cup. Also in the “ Mother Country ” team competing for the Rajah of Kolapore’s Imperial Challenge Cup.

1873—Col.-Sergt. Pitts, 4th Som. R.V.C., and Lieut. Board, 7th Som. R.V.C.—Both in English team competing for the International Challenge Cup.

1874—Pte. Kelly, 16th Som. R.V.C.—In the Irish team competing for the International Challenge Cup.

1875—Lieut. Board, 7th Som. R.V.C.—In the English team competing for the “Elcho” Shield.  
Col.-Sergt. Pitts, 4th Som. R.V.C.—In the English team competing for the International Challenge Cup.

1876—Col.-Sergt. Pitts, 4th Som. R.V.C.—In the English team competing for the International Challenge Cup. Also in “Mother Country” team competing for the Rajah of Kolapore’s Imperial Challenge Cup.

1877—Col.-Sergt. Pitts, 4th Som. R.V.C.—In the English team competing for the National Volunteer Challenge Trophy.

1878—Lieut. Toller, 28th Som. R.V.C.—In the English team competing for the “Elcho” Shield. In the English team competing for the National Volunteer Challenge Trophy. Top scorer in the team.  
Pte. Pitts, 5th Som. R.V.C.—In English team for the National Volunteer Challenge Trophy.  
Lieut. Toller, 28th Som. R.V.C.—Also selected for the Volunteer Officers’ team competing for the Army and Volunteers’ Challenge Cup (officers).

1879—Lieut. Toller, 28th Som. R.V.C.—In English team competing for the “Elcho” Shield. Also in English team competing for the National Volunteer Challenge Cup.

1883—Sergt. Howell, 3rd Som. R.V.C.—In the English team competing for the National Volunteer Challenge Trophy.  
Trooper Slade, West Som. Yeo.—In Yeomanry team competing for the United Service Challenge Cup.

1881—Corpl. Slate (? Slade), West Som. Yeo.—In the Yeomanry team competing for the United Service Challenge Cup.

1885—Corpl. Slade, West Som. Yeo., and Sergt. Raisin, West Som. Yeo.—Both in Yeomanry team competing for the United Services Challenge Cup.

1886—Corpl. Slade, West Som. Yeo., and Sergt. Raisin, West Som. Yeo.—Both in Yeomanry team competing for the United Service Challenge Cup.

1887—Trooper Asher, North Som. Yeo.—In Yeomanry team competing for the United Service Challenge Cup.

1888—Pte. D'Arcy, 2nd V.B. Som. L.I.—In Irish team competing for the National Volunteer Challenge Trophy.  
Trooper Asher, North Som. Yeo.—In Yeomanry team competing for the United Service Challenge Cup.

1889—Lieut. E. T. Alms, 2nd V.B. Som. L.I.—In the English team competing for the National Volunteer Challenge Trophy.

1890—Captain E. T. Alms, 2nd V.B. Som. L.I., and Bd.-Sergt. Willey, 2nd V.B. Som. L.I.—Both in English team competing for the National Volunteer Challenge Trophy.

1895—Pte. W. Howland, 1st V.B. Som. L.I.—In Volunteer team competing for the Whitehead Challenge Cup (Revolvers).  
Pte. Kelly, 2nd V.B. Som. L.I.—In Irish team for the National Volunteer Challenge Trophy.

1898—Pte. Howland, 1st V.B. Som. L.I.—In Volunteer team competing for the Whitehead Challenge Cup (Revolvers).

1899—Pte. Howland, 1st V.B. Som. L.I.—Ditto.

1900—Cyclist Howland, 1st V.B. Som. L.I.—Ditto.

1902—Pte. Howland, 1st V.B. Som. L.I.—Ditto.  
Trooper Bowerman, West Som. Yeo., and Major E. T. Alms, West Som. Yeo.—Both in Yeomanry team competing for the United Services Challenge Cup.

1903—Pte. Howland, 1st V.B. Som. L.I.—In Volunteer team competing for the Whitehead Challenge Cup (Revolvers).

1904—Pte. Howland, 1st V.B. Som. L.I.—Ditto. Made highest score in team.

1905—Pte. Howland, 1st V.B. Som. L.I.—Ditto.

1906—Pte. Howland, 1st V.B. Som. L.I.—Ditto.

1912—Major J. F. Keen, Wessex R.E.—In English teams competing for the " Mackinnon " Challenge Cup and National Challenge Trophy. Also in the Territorials team competing for the United Services Challenge Cup.\*

\* Annual Reports of the National Rifle Association.

There were, of course, many regimental prizes for encouraging rifle shooting. They usually took the form of money prizes or silver cups, but the "Twenty Badge" of the 1st Volunteer Battalion was perhaps unique. The badge was of silver, but quite small, not much bigger than a shilling. On the obverse was the regimental cap-badge within a circle, on which was inscribed, "Twenty Badge." There were a few small holes around the edge which enabled it to be sewn on the recipient's sleeve. The reverse of the badge was plain. It was awarded every year to the twenty best shots in the Battalion. If a holder could not secure a place in the twenty the following year he had to hand his badge over to one who had been able to do so.

Space does not permit, and it would not be sufficiently interesting, to give a list of rifle ranges which exist, or have existed, in Somerset. The early Rifle Volunteers had ranges on Hampton Down, Warleigh, Dunball—where the County Rifle Association usually held its annual meetings—and Dinder, nr. Wells. It is sufficient to say that at the present time the biggest range in Somerset, at Bedminster, is not the property of the Somerset Territorial Army Association, but belongs to Gloucestershire. And the biggest rifle range owned by the Somerset Territorial Army Association is not in Somerset, but in Wiltshire, namely, at Box, nr. Bath.

These ranges are spread all over the county. Where a hill was not available as a background, large mounds of earth were built up to serve as butts. These mounds will still exist in the distant future, when rifles will be as antiquated as bows are to-day. In our archaeological musings we have often wondered how they will be regarded, say, 1,000 years hence.

To a very great extent the efficiency of the Volunteers and the Territorials of to-day is due to the work of the Permanent Staff. At first the Instructors were Volunteers, who were specially enlisted into the Regular Army for the purpose. Afterwards Army Pensioners were employed, and now competent N.C.O.'s are posted to the Volunteer Battalions, principally from the County Regiment.

They are greatly respected in the towns in which they are stationed. Each Instructor, in the eyes of the inhabitants, is in himself a public institution, and, as such, a desirable acquisition to the neighbourhood. We have no record of an instance where that respect and trust have been misplaced.

It is surprising how rapidly the Permanent Staff adapt themselves to the manner and outlook of the country people ; and, no matter what part of the Kingdom they may come from, they can soon talk to the men under their instruction in the Somerset language.

Walking into a Drill Hall on drill night in the old Volunteer days, one could often hear something like this from the Instructor : " Now I want you chaps to understand theas thing is caw'd a rifle. But as all o'ee caw'n a gun, I be gwaine t'do the zame zo'z thee c'n understand I better. Wull, now, this is what theas got t'do wi' thee gun when I tell thee to 'zlope arms.' Chuck 'n up thee zide like this ; catch howld o'n wi' theas hand round the narrey part there and t'other 'and up there. Then thee put'n on the oppozite shoulder, like zo, and be carefull t'kip thee girt heads still. When thee's got'n on thee shoulder, cut thee right 'and away to thee zide, like that, an' doan't zlap thee birches when's do it."\*

When an Instructor spoke in that manner how could a Somerset man fail to respect him ! He was everywhere made as " wulcome az the vlowers in May."

\* We are informed by old Instructors that they often resorted to the dialect in order to make themselves better understood. Of course, it is not necessary in these days of education. The example given is our own composition.

## CHAPTER III.

## SOUTH AFRICA.\*

**W**HEN the time limit of the Boer Ultimatum expired on the 11th October, 1899, few people thought it would be necessary to take any extraordinary measures to raise a force capable of beating the natives of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. The Militia was not mobilized until nearly a month after the declaration of war. There was no hurried dispatch of troops from England. Though Mafeking was besieged and Ladysmith surrounded, there was no need for the nation to worry. Baden-Powell was a superman, and Buller was marching to relieve Sir George White. It was unthinkable that British arms would fail against undisciplined Boer farmers. The optimism of our countrymen was remarkable.

Then came the black week. On the 9th December, General Gatacre's force was almost annihilated at Stormberg. Two days later Lord Methuen made his unsuccessful and costly attack at Magersfontein; and on the 15th, to make the proverbial third disaster, General Sir Redvers Buller suffered a serious reverse at Colenso, and had to retire to Chievely, leaving eleven guns behind.

It was then that England stirred herself. Offers of service came pouring in from all sides. The Yeomanry and Volunteers were among the first to volunteer, and, recognising the paramount value of trained men, their offers were gladly accepted by the Government. The North and West Somerset Regiments of Yeomanry Cavalry each contributed a company to the Regiments of Imperial Yeomanry which were raised. A Volunteer Active Service Company was also formed by volunteers from the three Somerset Volunteer Battalions. This company was to be attached to the 2nd Batt. Somerset L.I., then in South Africa, to take the place of the Mounted Infantry Company. In addition, Somerset con-

\* We are indebted to Colonel E. G. Hardy, C.M.G., Lieut.-Colonel D. S. Watson, D.S.O., Lieut.-Colonel F. N. Q. Shuldham, Captain G. B. Bennett, and Mr. W. B. Maxwell for reading this Chapter and revising mis-statements of fact.

tributed half a section of Engineers to the Section raised by the Devon and Somerset Volunteer Engineers.

The Imperial Yeomanry Companies were designated the 25th (West Somerset) and 48th (North Somerset) Companies, and with the 26th (Dorset) and 27th (Devonshire) Companies formed the 7th Battalion of Imperial Yeomanry. The Battalion was commanded by Colonel C. W. H. Helyar, formerly of the 3rd Hussars, of Poundisford Lodge, Pitminster. The Adjutant was Captain E. G. Hardy (now Colonel Hardy, of Lattiford House, Wincanton), and the Quartermaster was Captain A. C. E. Locke, of the West Somerset Yeomanry.

The establishment of the Companies consisted of one Captain, four Subalterns, and 115 rank and file. The officers were :—

25th (West Somerset) Coy.—Captain H. W. Harris, formerly of the 3rd Wilts Regiment, Lieutenants A. M. Myburgh, B. Fitzgerald, C. E. Levita, and H. T. Stanley.

48th (North Somerset) Coy.—Major W. Maxwell Sherston, formerly of the 18th Hussars (ranking as Captain), Captain G. A. Gibbs (ranking as Lieutenant), and Lieutenants T. R. Symons, John Cooke-Hurle, and A. C. Thynne.

Though the Companies consisted mainly of members of the two County Yeomanry Regiments, many civilians were enrolled to bring them up to full strength.

The 7th Battalion, Imperial Yeomanry, with the exception of the West Somerset Company, sailed from the Royal Albert Docks in the *Manchester Merchant* on the 1st March, 1900. Good-byes were said amidst scenes of tremendous enthusiasm through the news of the relief of Ladysmith arriving just as they embarked. They looked upon this as a happy augury.

The Battalion had an uneventful journey, and arrived at Cape-town on the 23rd March ; but owing to the transport difficulty the men were kept on board for four long days, and did not disembark until the morning of the 28th. They then marched to the large Yeomanry Camp established at Maitland, about six miles from Capetown.

On the 8th March the West Somerset Company embarked on the troopship *Mahratta*. Just before leaving Taunton, Sergt. Howell, of this Company, received the gratifying information that he had been awarded the Distinguished Service Order for the part

he had played in quelling a native rising in West Africa a short time before. He was one of the civilian volunteers, and had been given the rank of Sergeant on account of having held a commissioned rank in the rebellion referred to.

The Company disembarked at Capetown on the 30th March, and joined the rest of the 7th Battalion at Maitland Camp.

There followed a few days of intensive training, but Colonel Helyar was not the one to hold back his war dogs when they strained at the leash. As a result of his representations the Battalion, with the exception of the North Somerset Company, entrained for Naauwpoort on the 8th April. It was the first Battalion of Imperial Yeomanry to proceed to the front. The North Somerset Company followed on the 12th. Arriving at Naauwpoort the Battalion travelled on to Springfontein, covering altogether a distance of nearly 700 miles.

The latter part of the journey was a revelation to the men. As they drew nearer to the Orange River the signs of war became evident. Here and there they saw burnt out and deserted farms; many a solitary grave with a wooden cross; and, occasionally, there passed a Red Cross train bearing back the mangled. It was then that the men began to realise the grim work before them.

Detraining at Springfontein, they marched to Edenburg, where they were joined by the North Somerset Company on the 15th. This Company did not stay long, however, for almost immediately Major Sherston, who was a nephew of Lord Roberts, received orders to march his Company to Bloemfontein to join the main Army as the Commander-in-Chief's escort. Leaving their less fortunate comrades they arrived at the Army Headquarters on the 22nd.

While at Bloemfontein the North Somersets were employed mainly as dispatch-riders for the Headquarters Staff. On the 2nd May the famous advance to Pretoria recommenced, and Lord Roberts' escort were the favoured spectators of all the pageantry which attended a successful General on the march. They were present when the Landrost and town officials of Kroonstad came out and surrendered the town; they were drawn up beside the Commander-in-Chief when ten thousand troops marched past in the Market Square. It was an impressive spectacle for any man to see; to men who had seen comparatively little of military pomp it was inspiring.

Yet the North Somersets had their hardships. Often they marched for days on short rations ; were for hours in the saddle drenched to the skin or scorched by the burning sun. Winter was coming on, and despite the heat of the day, the nights were bitterly cold. The unusual conditions of life were bound to affect them, and when they resumed the march on the 22nd May more than twenty were left behind with enteric.

After leaving Kroonstad the Army moved rapidly, and the Vaal River was reached on the 27th. Two days later Elandsfontein was occupied and Johannesburg, seven miles away, was summoned to surrender. On the 31st, Dr. Krause, the Landrost, rode into the British camp and the Golden City was handed over unconditionally.

The triumphal marching past was repeated here, and the North Somersets were again prominent. On the 1st of June the West Somersets marched into Johannesburg, and we must now follow their fortunes since the North Somerset Company left them at Edenburg.

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On the day the North Somersets came up with the 7th Battalion at Edenburg, the West Somerset Company marched off to Reddersburg, arriving there the same evening. On the 18th the 7th Battalion moved off towards Dewetsdorp, camping that night at Rosendale. A further advance was made the next day, when Oorloockpoint was reached.

Since leaving Edenburg it had rained without ceasing. The men were drenched to the skin ; and, to add to their discomfort, the transport with the supplies could not keep up with them. When darkness fell they sat down on the soaked veldt, put their horses reins over their arms, their saddles to rest their backs against, and with waterproof sheets over their heads they slept as only exhausted and half-starved men can. With the dawn they would stretch their cramped limbs, saddle up, and be off once more. They never knew exactly where.

These were real hardships to men who had known of little but the soft side of life. Little as they liked it, they carried on with all the fortitude of the English yeomen who slept in the storm the night before Agincourt.

On the 20th April the Battle of Dewetsdorp began, and the West Somersets received their baptism of fire. They were employed mainly to guard the guns, but some were sent out on a particularly

hazardous undertaking. They were sent in the direction of the enemy, ostensibly to reconnoitre, but actually to draw the enemy's fire and reveal his positions. On the first day the battle was little more than an artillery duel, in which the Boers appear to have had the best of it. Next day the West Somerset Company was again sent to reconnoitre the enemy position. This time it was heavily shelled with the nerve-racking "Pom-poms," but in some remarkable way there were no casualties. On the 22nd General French appeared with reinforcements, and the battle was resumed. Fighting in almost semi-darkness, caused by a vast flight of locusts, the enemy's left was turned, and though he held out stubbornly to the last his guns were finally silenced, and the British troops passed through Dewetsdorp on the 23rd.

The following day the West Somersets were sent with a strong force to relieve Wepener, where a small body of British troops had held out for days against overwhelming numbers. The Boers had prepared an ambush on the way, but they were discovered and retreated hastily. The relieving force arrived at Wepener on the 25th to find that the siege had been raised as a result of the victory at Dewetsdorp, and General Hart's success at Bushman's Kop. In this latter affair the 2nd Battalion Somerset L.I., with the Volunteer Company, took part—as we shall see.

The West Somersets returned to Dewetsdorp, but were allowed little rest, for on the 28th, at 3 a.m., they were called upon to go to the assistance of the Scots Guards, who had been attacked while escorting a convoy. The Guards were relieved at a moment when they thought all was lost.

On the 1st May the 7th Battalion of Imperial Yeomanry arrived at Thaba 'Nchu. From here 100 men of the Battalion were sent into Bloemfontein to escort a convoy to Thaba 'Nchu, which arrived safely on the 3rd. On the 4th and 5th the 7th Battalion was with General Rundle's force driving the enemy from the hills they had occupied in the vicinity. There was little actual fighting, but in defending a kopje the West Somersets sustained their first casualty, Trooper Perkins being wounded in the head with a shell splinter.

On the 8th the 7th Battalion reached Bloemfontein, but the enemy, massing between the waterworks at Sanna's Post and Thaba 'Nchu, the West Somersets were soon on the march once more. The Boers did not wait to try conclusions with them, but the

Yeomanry remained with General Rundle and took part in the operations which resulted in the occupation of Ladybrand on the 15th.

Two days later the 7th Battalion of Imperial Yeomanry was at Brandtford, where orders were received to proceed to Kroonstad to join the main Army. This the Devon and Dorset Companies did eventually, but the West Somersets were called upon to return to Thaba 'Nchu, where skirmishes and raids by a large force of the enemy were effervescent.

On the 1st June the Company joined the 7th Battalion at Johannesburg, and camped at Orange Grove, where the North Somerset Company was already established. Next day the last stage of the advance to Pretoria was commenced. The West Somersets, therefore, from the time they detrained at Springfontein had been given very little rest. They had been on the march almost every day, and the times they came in touch with the enemy were without number. Their steadiness under shell and rifle fire had won them the commendation of their superiors, and before Pretoria was reached they had won for themselves the popular name of "The Fighting 25th." When they reached Johannesburg more than one-third of their number had been left behind, chiefly through illness; which is clear evidence of the trying times they had passed through.

In the final march on Pretoria the West Somersets formed part of the advance guard, an honour they thoroughly appreciated. The North Somersets, of course, were still with the Headquarters Staff. On the 4th June, at dawn, the advance guard came in touch with the enemy, and the guns in the forts around Pretoria opened fire. A party of the West Somersets, under Lieutenant Fitzgerald, was told off to seize a small kopje on the right. When they arrived within a short distance of it they were met with a hail of bullets, and were dismayed to see the Boers strongly entrenched on the hill. The men dropped to the ground at once, but several of the horses were hit, and, maddened with pain, they dashed off in the direction of the enemy. Though Lieutenant Fitzgerald and his men were unscathed, their position was most precarious. The slightest movement drew upon them the enemy's fire, and thus they lay nearly the whole of the day, while the sun burned them with pitiless intensity. Towards the evening supports came up, and the enemy retreated.

It was in this engagement that the North Somersets received their baptism of fire. While the majority of the Company saw the battle from a distance, a section, under the command of Major Sherston, occupied and held a small hill in support of some Mounted Infantry.

The Boers made only a half-hearted attempt to save their capital, and that night they evacuated the town. Next day the Union Jack was hoisted on the Raadzaal, and everybody said the war was virtually over.

But Botha's Army was still intact, and in the Free State De Wet was gathering around him those columns of mounted burghers with which he harassed the British lines of communication.

On the 8th June the 7th Battalion of the Imperial Yeomanry left Pretoria in pursuit of the Boers, who had taken a large number of British prisoners to Lydenburg. The Battalion at this time consisted of the West Somerset, Devon, Dorset, and Sussex Imperial Yeomanry Companies, and Compton's Horse was attached, the whole being under the command of Major Browne. The day following their departure from Pretoria the West Somersets were in the vicinity of the farm where Lord Roberts, accompanied by an escort of North Somerset Imperial Yeomanry, was to have met General Botha to discuss terms of surrender. The conference did not materialise, and on the 11th the Battle of Diamond Hill commenced.

The West Somersets were more or less spectators of this battle, and as soon as it was over they returned to Pretoria. Here they were assured that there would be no more fighting, and were invited to join the Transvaal Mounted Police. This the West Somersets did with the exception of four, their engagement being for three months only.

Up to this time they had been drawing cavalry pay (trooper, 1s. 5d. a day), but in the police their daily rates of pay were : Captain, 30s. ; Subaltern, 25s. ; Sergeant, 15s. ; Corporal, 12s. 6d. ; and Private, 10s. Only about half the North Somersets joined the police, the remainder continuing to provide dispatch riders for the Headquarters Staff, and escorts for the Commander-in-Chief.

We will now leave the Yeomanry in Pretoria, where they carried out police patrols, arrested Kaffirs and Boers suspected of

espionage, and occasionally rounded up small parties of the enemy in the vicinity of the Capital. The Volunteer Active Service Company shall have our attention.

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The Volunteer Company consisted of Captain E. J. Whitting (3rd Vol. Battalion), Lieutenant J. R. Dawson (1st Vol. Battalion), and Lieut. D. S. Watson (2nd Vol. Battalion), and 116 other ranks. During the Company's stay in Taunton a number of the men were billeted in the Old Gaol, now the County Territorial Hall. Their send-off at Taunton Station was a tremendous demonstration of the good wishes of the townspeople. Arriving at Southampton the Company embarked on the *Tintagel Castle*, which sailed from England on the 10th March, 1900. A draft of twenty waiting men followed in the *Assaye*, which left the Royal Albert Docks on the 5th May. On board the *Tintagel Castle* was also the Active Service Company of the Devon and Somerset Volunteer Engineers.

Arriving at Capetown the Somerset Infantry and Engineer Volunteers were transferred to the *Goorkha*, which sailed for Durban on the 3rd April. On the 6th they reached Port Elizabeth, where the Engineers disembarked and proceeded by train to Bloemfontein. Their activities we will record later.

On the 8th April the *Goorkha* arrived at Durban. Here the Volunteer Company joined the 2nd Battalion fresh from the relief of Ladysmith, but suffering still from its terrible experiences at Grobler's Kloof. The 2nd Battalion embarked on the *Hawarden Castle* on the 9th, and the following day started for East London. Landing there on the 12th, the Volunteers with G and H Companies entrained for Aliwal North on the following day, which happened to be Good Friday. Early the following morning they arrived at Stormberg, and the Volunteers gazed with mixed feelings on Rooi Kop, where Gatacre's force had been trapped. There was little in its appearance, jutting black against the clear morning sky, to suggest that it was the scene of an awful massacre. The same day Aliwal North was reached, and marching across the Orange River, the 2nd Battalion camped for the night in enemy territory.

The 2nd Battalion Somerset L.I. now belonged to the 5th Infantry Brigade under Brig.-General (afterwards Major-General) A. Fitzroy Hart. Operating with the Colonial Division, the Brigade moved off on Easter Sunday at 5.20 a.m. to effect the relief of

Wepener. Rain fell all that day. The road was a quagmire, and after a most exhaustive march the Battalion halted at Beetleskraal. The men were drenched, and to make matters worse the transport failed to arrive with the tents and other things which would have given them a modicum of comfort.

The march was resumed on the 17th, and on the following day Rouxville, deserted except for Kaffirs, was occupied. The march continued day after day, and on the 21st the enemy's scouts were sighted. They fell back on their main body on Bushman's Kop, and the following day, a Sunday, the engagement was fought. Half the 2nd Battalion was engaged, while the other half, which included the Volunteers, guarded the baggage. Early in the morning of the 23rd the battle ceased. The enemy retired, and the road to Wepener was open. The relieving force reached Wepener on the 25th to find its brave little garrison was already free in consequence of the victory at Dewetsdorp. Since leaving their camp near the Orange River, the Volunteers had marched upwards of 80 miles under conditions which were trying to the most hardened campaigners. It was a real test of endurance, and the Volunteers stood it magnificently.

Leaving Wepener, the 2nd Battalion reached Smithfield on the 1st May. Two days later it started on the march to Bethulie, but when within ten miles of the town it was ordered back to Smithfield. The Battalion stayed there until the 23rd. On that day the Somersets commenced a march to Bethulie Station, and arrived there on the 25th. Two days later they entrained for Vryberg, reaching that place on the 29th. Here the 2nd Battalion was split up along the Kimberly-Mafeking Railway, and settled down for the long and monotonous duty of guarding the line from possible raids. About half the Volunteer Company was stationed at Brussels Siding and others were stationed in Vryberg.

Here they stayed until 10th August, when the Volunteers at Brussels Siding moved to Phokwana. They moved to Warrenton on the 20th September, where for the most part they were employed in trench-digging.

During the first week in October General Settle's Vryberg Column began to assemble in Christinna. On the 1st October the 5th Infantry Brigade arrived there, and on the 10th the Volunteers marched in from Warrenton, a distance of 22 miles. The guerilla

warfare which set in after the occupation of Pretoria was increasing in intensity. De Wet, with a large force of burghers, was becoming more and more daring. Swooping down on small convoys he would destroy them and be off before a force could be collected to capture him. He played havoc with the lines of communication.

It was in the rounding up of this most elusive enemy that the Somerset Volunteers with General Settle's Column were now engaged. Leaving Christinna on the 13th October, the Column marched along the Vaal River, crossing it at several points. Bloemoff was occupied on the 14th, and on the 18th the Column arrived at Hoopstad. On the 21st they took part in the occupation of Bothaville and the next day returned to Hoofman's Drift. During this march the Volunteers had many varied experiences. They did outpost duty at night, and took their turn in the van and rear guards. They had great difficulty in getting the guns and waggons across the river, and when the oxen dropped dead with exhaustion they harnessed themselves to the vehicles. On other occasions they would be engaged in searching a farm for arms and hidden enemies ; and more than once they burned down farms when the occupants, though flying the white flag, fired on the Column.

On the 23rd they had a fierce engagement with the enemy in the vicinity of Hoofman's Drift. The Boers, under De Wet, were in overwhelming numbers, and at 2 p.m. the British Column commenced to retreat towards Hoopstad. The vanguard was attacked, but after desperate fighting the enemy were driven off, and the Column arrived at Hoopstad that night.

After this there was more marching, more farmers were arrested, more farms destroyed, and large droves of cattle commandeered. On the 30th the Column marched into Boshof, and there the men enjoyed a bath and general clean-up.

On the 24th October De Wet had surrounded Koffiefontein and besieged it. The Somerset Volunteers were sent down to assist in its relief. But the only part they appear to have played was to patrol the hills around Honeynest Kloof. Koffiefontein was relieved on the 3rd November, and during the remainder of the month the Volunteers were employed in the neighbourhood of Jacobsdal. Their experiences here were much the same as in the operations along the Vaal River.

During the first five days of December the Volunteers were continuously on the march until they arrived at Edenburg on the 5th. Here they slept in the Church, and rested till the 9th. They then marched to Reddersburg, and on the way had the satisfaction of capturing a wagon load of provisions going out to De Wet. As the will-o'-the-wisp Boer Commander was expected to attack Reddersberg, the Volunteers were kept there until the 12th. He did not appear on the scene, however, and they went in search of him. He was retreating towards Thaba 'Nchu, and a cordon was gradually drawn around him. It was about this time that telegrams were received in England : "De Wett's capture a matter of hours only." But the senders did not realise the Free Stater's daring. On the 15th, at the very moment when all seemed lost, he gathered his forces together and made a desperate attack on the weakest part of the line. His daring succeeded, and he broke through. It is true he lost his transport and some horses and mules, but what did these matter when nearly every Boer farmer was ready to find him more ?

The 2nd Battalion Somerset L.I. reached Thaba 'Nchu on the 17th, after a march of 21 miles. The following day the Battalion took over the entrenchments at Sanna's Post, which protected the Bloemfontein water supply. Since leaving Warrenton the Volunteers had been continuously on the march, and altogether had covered more than 700 miles.

The Volunteers remained with the 2nd Battalion until the 31st March, 1901, when they marched into Bloemfontein. Here they entrained for Capetown on the 4th April, and on the 13th they sailed for England on the *Templemore*. Arriving at Southampton on the 3rd May, they entrained immediately for Taunton and reached the Depot the same evening.

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We must now return to the Yeomanry in Pretoria, and record three incidents which cast a gloom over the Somerset Companies and the West Somersets in particular.

The first was the cowardly murder of Colonel Helyar. When the men of the 7th Battalion of Imperial Yeomanry transferred to the police he became, in a sense, unemployed. Having received permission to attach himself to Colonel Hickman's Column, he started off to find the Column somewhere along the Crocodile River.

Accompanied by his servant, he had not gone far before he found himself at fault. He slept that night at a farm, where he appears to have been well received. But the following morning he had not proceeded 200 yards on his journey when a number of Boers fired on him from a kopje by the roadside. He fell from his horse and died instantly.

The Colonel's servant rushed out of the farm to find out the reason for the firing. He was made a prisoner, but eventually he escaped and after undergoing terrible suffering, reached Pretoria. His statements were so incoherent, however, that it was some days before he could give a reliable account of the affair. Colonel Hickman then led out a search party, and found the body near the farm, lightly covered with stones. It was brought into Pretoria on the 12th August, and was buried in the cemetery on the 15th with most impressive ceremony. The escort and funeral party were found by the West Somerset Yeomanry, and Lord Roberts and all his staff attended the funeral.

The second incident was a most unfortunate accident. A trooper of the North Somersets came off police patrol in Pretoria late one night, carrying his fully loaded rifle. Entering his room where several of his companions were sleeping, he hung up his rifle. The nail was loose, however, and the rifle fell and exploded. The sleepers were startled into wakefulness. All, except one, and he lay very still. A light was brought, and Trooper Henry Gallwey, of the West Somerset Imperial Yeomanry, was found lying in a pool of blood, quite dead. He was the son of Colonel Gallwey, who commanded the 2nd Battalion Somerset L.I., in South Africa. The Colonel's whereabouts were uncertain at this time, and he did not hear of the tragedy till after his son's funeral.

The other event was the death in action of Lieutenant H. T. Stanley, elder son of E. J. Stanley, Esq., of Quantock Lodge, M.P. for Bridgwater.

Those of the 7th Battalion who elected to remain Yeomen were gathered together to form a composite Company under the command of Captain Sir Elliott Lees, M.P., Dorset Imperial Yeomanry. The Company was attached to General Clement's Brigade which was endeavouring to quell the Rustenberg district. Skirmishes with the enemy were daily occurrences, and are too numerous to record here. One of these minor affairs occurred at Hekpoort on the 16th

September, when a section of the composite Company, under Lieutenant Stanley, held a small kopje, which protected the right of the Column. The Boers poured in an enfilading fire on the little band, and the situation began to look serious. Captain Lees had just crept up to Lieut. Stanley to order him to withdraw when the latter was shot through the head. The section had to retire hurriedly, but his body was recovered the following day, and was buried in the garden of a near-by farm occupied by British people.

On the 13th October the Yeomanry's three month's service in the Mounted Police ended, and the majority of the men refused to re-engage. As their pay was to be reduced by half, they said they would rather do some more fighting. Accordingly, the 7th Battalion was reformed under the command of Major P. Browne, Dorset Imperial Yeomanry. The 69th (Sussex) Company had now been added to the Battalion in place of the North Somerset Company, which was still at Headquarters.

Joining General Clement's Column, the West Somersets had their headquarters at Reitfontein until their departure for England. From Reitfontein they helped in the many vain endeavours to round up the commandoes of De La Rey and Beyers.

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The North Somersets found the escort for Sir Alfred Milner, the High Commissioner for Cape Colony, when he visited Lord Roberts at Pretoria. The Company also followed the Commander-in-Chief when he moved his Headquarters to Johannesburg in the beginning of November. Lord Roberts left for England the following month, and the North Somersets furnished his last escort in Johannesburg. Major Sherston accompanied him as his A.D.C. Captain Gibbs had been invalidated home as a result of a steeplechase accident, and the command of the Company was taken over by Lieut. T. R. Symons.

Lord Roberts had given Major Sherston permission to present a badge to his men to commemorate their association with him. The best description of the badge which we have is the following : " On a blue enamelled ground is a raised 'R' in gold, surmounted by an earl's coronet in gold. Around is a circlet of gold bearing the words, 'Commander-in-Chief's Yeomanry escort, South Africa Field Force,' and above that is another gold crown, beautifully chased, while at the foot are the words, 'Virtute et Valore.' "

After Lord Roberts' departure the North Somersets were employed for a time on patrol work in the vicinity of the Rand, but on the 30th January they left for Rosettinville, some six miles from Johannesburg. Here they received a draft of the new Yeomanry, which had been raised to relieve them. The Company arrived at Krugersdorp on the 17th March, and shortly after went on to Klerksdorp. The remainder of the new Yeomanry joined them here, but the original members were not to be relieved for some time. In the beginning of April the whole Company was hurried off to join General Dixon's Column, which was being sent to the turbulent Rustenberg district.

Marching from Bank Station on the 18th April, the North Somersets covered the rear of the Column. They were sniped from time to time, and one man was wounded. There was no exciting experience, however, until the 23rd of April, when a small Boer lagaar and about 300 head of cattle were captured in the Hekpoort Valley. Naauwpoort, in the Magaliesberg Mountains, was reached on the 25th, and shortly afterwards half the original members escorted a convoy into Krugersdorp. They were joined a few days later by the remainder of the original Company. Next day they entrained for Worcester, Cape Colony, there to refit for home. The Company arrived in Capetown on the 3rd June, and embarked on board the *Hawarden Castle*. After a voyage lasting twenty-three days it reached Southampton on the 25th June, 1901.

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In the meantime the West Somerset Company was having an extremely trying time with General Clement's Column. De La Rey's policy was to avoid engagements with large British forces and to fall upon small parties and inadequately protected convoys, destroying them utterly. On the 3rd December he attacked a large convoy proceeding to Rustenberg in two sections. The first section was captured and the wagons fired, but the second put up a gallant defence. An appeal for assistance was sent into Reitfontein, and the West Somersets with a scratch force of 50 Mounted Infantry, 150 Infantry in wagons, and 2 twelve-pounders dashed off to the rescue. The Boers retired on their approach, and the relieving force escorted the convoy into Rustenberg.

On the 13th December General Clement's Column met with a terrible reverse at Nooitgedacht. It was trekking along the foot of

the Magaliesberg Mountains in search of De La Rey, who was at Hekpoort, and camped beneath some cliffs on the night of the 12th. The Northumberland Fusiliers were stationed on the top of the cliffs, while the Yeomanry occupied a separate camp to the west of the main camp. De La Rey, acting in conjunction with Beyers, swept down on the Column in the early hours of the 13th, outnumbering the British by two to one. The Boers, being dressed in khaki, for a moment nonplussed the British, who took them for a Colonial Corps which was in the neighbourhood. The Fusiliers on the hill above the camp were all captured, and the enemy poured a hail of bullets into the remainder of the Column below. The guns and waggons were limbered up and with great difficulty the Column retired from the death-trap. All the tentage and a considerable amount of stores fell into the hands of the enemy, and the British Column, minus half its strength, retired into Reitfontein.

The men of Clement's Column had their revenge soon after, when, acting in conjunction with General French, they fought a continuous series of engagements with De La Rey from the 19th December, and finally drove him from the neighbourhood of the Magaliesberg Mountains.

Thus the West Somersets continued to take part in countless skirmishes with the Boers under De La Rey, Beyers and Kemp.

On the 8th May they left Reitfontein for Pretoria *en route* for the refitting camp at Worcester. They left Capetown on the *Tintagel Castle* on 25th, and arrived at Southampton on the 15th June. There they were welcomed back by Colonel William Barrett, who had succeeded Colonel Forester in the command of the Regiment.

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The history of the Devon and Somerset Volunteer Engineers can be soon told. Leaving the Volunteer Active Service Company at Port Elizabeth they proceeded by train to Bloemfontein. Here they were immediately put to work repairing the bridges and the railway destroyed by the retreating Boers. They reconstructed the Talbesch Bridge, and then helped with the reconstruction of the great bridge across the Vaal. Rinhosta Bridge next received their attention, and part of the Section was engaged with the construction train at Leeuwspruit Station, when De Wett swooped down upon it on the 14th June, 1900. On this occasion Sapper Salmon, of Bath, was so severely wounded that he died a few days later. Sappers

F. Garland, B. Butt and F. G. Kirton, all of the Weston-super-Mare Company, were reported missing.

After constructing some trenches at Viljoen's Drift, the Section proceeded to Pretoria. It was then sent to work on the Delagoa line, and reconstructed the bridge at Bronkhurst Spruit in four days. Middelburgh, Belfast, Waterval-Boven, Waterval-Onder, and Nooitgedacht found work for the Volunteer handy men. They were then engaged in the Crocodile Valley, and helped to re-erect the Knap River Bridge, the second largest bridge they had been employed upon. The Barberton railway line was their next scene of operations, and, being stationed at Komati Poort, they worked the rolling stock in the vicinity.

The Section left Capetown in the *Andrew* in April, and arrived at Southampton on 16th May, 1901.

We have discovered little concerning the Volunteer Engineer Section which relieved the original one. It was commanded by Lieut. Lake, of Exeter, and during the greater part of its stay in South Africa was engaged with an armoured train. It may therefore have experienced many exciting incidents, but even if we knew them they could not have been recorded here. Our space is limited, and we still have much to tell.

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It was unfortunate that only a few members of the second contingents of the North and West Somerset Yeomanry Regiments were posted to the 25th and 48th Imperial Yeomanry Companies. After the original members had been sent home, about thirty of the 48th Company consisted of Volunteers from the North Somerset Regiment. A few of the first contingent in each company agreed to continue to serve in South Africa. Of these, Corpl. W. H. Noke, of the North Somersets, and Trooper G. B. Bennett, of the West Somersets, received commissions.

The new members of the 48th (North Somerset) Company soon received their baptism. Few men have received such a terrible introduction to warfare. On the 29th May, General Dixon was returning to his camp at Vlakfontein when the Boers, under Kemp, fell upon the rearguard, where the North Somersets were. The attack took place in a valley, the hill on one side being covered with boulders and the other with long veldt grass, dry as tinder. In the grass the enemy had laid a train of powder which they fired just

before they attacked. Fanned by a stiff breeze, the smoke swept down on the rearguard, blinding them. To add to the confusion, the Boers when they charged shouted that they were the Scottish Horse, and were amongst the North Somersets before they realised the ruse. They fought desperately to save the two guns which were with the rearguard, but were hopelessly outnumbered. The place was an inferno. The flames crept on down the hillside, where many helpless wounded lay. Unable to move, the flames licked over them, and their screams added to the din.

Most of the North Somersets were surrounded, and the enemy called upon them to surrender. Lieut Noke yelled back, "No surrender," and spurring his horse on tried to break through. Several shots rang out, and he fell from his horse mortally wounded.

The main body of the Column then came to the rescue, and the guns were recaptured. But the price had been terrible. The battlefield was littered with dead, many of them charred beyond recognition.

The Boers were shortly afterwards reinforced by De La Rey, and General Dixon wisely retreated to Naauwpoort.

The North Somerset Company, sadly reduced in numbers, remained with General Dixon's Column, which was later commanded by Colonel Kekewich, the defender of Kimberley. Under this energetic commander they were engaged in numerous skirmishes with the enemy, but always a pitched battle was avoided, and their duties consisted of the rounding up of small parties, the escorting of Boer families to the concentration camps, and the commandeering of cattle and farm stock.

Though their power of resistance was gradually weakened, the Boers never failed to take advantage of a chance to make a surprise attack. On the night of the 29th September, 1901, they crept unsuspected along the bank of the Selous River till they reached Kekewich's camp at Moedwill. Just before dawn the sleeping North Somersets were awakened suddenly with the rattle of rifle fire and bullets tearing the canvas of their tents. Though taken by surprise, "Kekewich's Bushmen" put up a sturdy defence, and eventually the enemy withdrew.

Colonel Kekewich made a similar attack on a Boer lagaar at Beestekraal, on the Crocodile River. Marching by night on the

28th of October to Hartebeestespruit, he hid during the following day. Swooping down on the sleeping Boers at dawn on the 30th, he captured the lagaar with 78 prisoners. Among them was Commandant B. Klopper, a former Chairman of the Transvaal Volksraad.

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The West Somerset Company—to a great extent “West Somerset” in name only—continued to serve with General Clement’s Column in the Reitfontein district.

The Company was commanded by Captain John Cooke-Hurle, who had transferred from the North Somerset Company. His Lieutenants were Salter, Ford, Ferguson, Pye-Smith, and G. B. Bennett. The new men received a certain amount of training at Reitfontein, but on joining Colonel Hackett-Thompson’s Column they carried out several night raids on neighbouring farms, and took a large number of prisoners.

For some time after this the Column was engaged in patrolling the district between Pretoria and Krugersdorp. Later it moved North to Bronkerspruit and Balmoral. It was Colonel Hackett-Thompson’s Column which pursued the party of Boers which derailed a train between Waterval and Hamanskraal, and carried off the mail bags. They were caught at Wagon Drift, and after a brisk fight the mails were recaptured. The Column moved back to Waterval, arriving there on the 8th September.

On the 18th October, the Column again came in touch with the enemy. In the fighting which ensued, Trooper T. H. Nation, of the West Somersets, was killed.

Leaving the Pretoria-Krugersdorp area, the West Somersets moved by train to Klerksdorp and joined General Kekewich’s Column. They were then employed in covering the infantry while the latter constructed and held the block-houses between Klerksdorp and Leckenburg. During this time the Yeomanry made several long night marches, and on one occasion surprised De La Rey’s rearguard, capturing 300 prisoners. The West Somerset’s also formed part of the columns which went to the assistance of Colonel Von Donop’s Convoy on 25th February, 1902, and Lord Methuen, at Tweebosch, on 7th March, the same year. In the latter case, they were too late to prevent the capture of Lord Methuen, who had been wounded.

After the completion of the block-houses, the Yeomanry took part in the driving of the enemy on to the fortified lines.

Captain Cooke-Hurle was in command of the Company for about two months, and was then succeeded by Lieut. Salter. Six months later the latter was killed, and for the remainder of the war the Company was under the command of Lieut. Geoffrey B. Bennett, who also brought it back to England.

In addition to the splendid fighting qualities they displayed, the West Somersets won for themselves quite a sporting reputation. Though only a Company, they had a Rugby team which was practically unbeatable by any British or Colonial Regiment with which they came in contact. The stalwart of the team was Trooper Mein, the Taunton and Kent footballer.



The South African War came to an end on the 20th May, 1902, when the Peace Treaty was signed. The foregoing sums up the activities of the second Yeomanry contingents, and gives an idea of the work they did up to the Signing of Peace. To give a more detailed account is impossible in the limited space at our disposal.

It was the first war in which the Somerset Yeomanry and Volunteers had taken part, and they can point to a record of fighting and hardship of which they have every reason to feel proud.

## CHAPTER IV. UNIFORMS, COLOURS, ETC.

In view of the fact that the Volunteers had to provide their own clothing, it was desirable that a plain, serviceable, but inexpensive uniform should be adopted. The Lord-Lieutenant therefore decided that it should be grey with black facings.

Grey was the colour adopted almost universally at this time. Its serviceability and moderate cost were not the only commendable points about it. In time of war it would have been much less conspicuous than the scarlet of the Regular Army, and would therefore have led to a saving of many valuable lives. We have seen that the black facings were also adopted in 1803. It was fitting that Somerset should choose this particular colour, for it was an expression of the county's loyalty to the House of Hanover. A black cockade was adopted by King George I. to distinguish his House from that of William and Mary and Queen Anne, represented by a yellow cockade, and the Stuart party which wore a white cockade.

There were, however, no instructions as to the type of head-dress which Volunteers should wear, and each corps seized upon this chance to be different from the remainder. Some had flat caps with a peak, while others wore shakoes. These again were distinguished by white or black plumes and white, black or red balls, while others had cockade.

The Wincanton Corps could not sufficiently distinguish itself by its head-dress, so blue facings took the place of the black.

In 1877 the 1st Volunteer Battalion elected to wear the scarlet uniform of the County Regiment\*, but until 1889 it continued to wear black facings when they were changed to the Royal blue of the Somerset L.I. (Prince Albert's). At first, the officers and sergeants were not allowed to wear the usual infantry sash. The officers of the 1st Volunteer Battalion continued to wear the black cross-belt worn with the grey uniform, but the sergeants were supplied with white belts. Shortly before 1901, however, the latter were permitted to wear the sash.†

The 1st Volunteer Battalion Sergeants then enjoyed a distinction which is peculiar to the Sergeants of the Somerset Light Infantry.

\* Colonel Skrine's History of the Regiment in the *Book of the Volunteer Bazaar*, 1887.      † *Volunteer Regulations*.

The Sergeants of all other Infantry Regiments in the Army wear a sash over the right shoulder. The Sergeants of the Somerset L.I. wear it over the *left* shoulder with the knot on the right side. This unique distinction was granted to the Regiment by the Duke of Cumberland at the Battle of Culloden in 1746. The Regiment, then known as Pulteney's Regiment, was on the right of the British Army, a post of honour, where they fought under the eye of the Duke. Their steadfastness seemed to have impressed His Royal Highness, for after the battle he called for the Colonel, and asked him what mark of honour he could confer on the Regiment. Tradition states that the Colonel asked that as other regiments tied their sashes on the left side, he would like his regimental sashes tied on the right side. In making this request we have little doubt that he intended the distinction to commemorate chiefly the fact that the Regiment held the right of the line on that memorable day.\*

The other two Volunteer Battalions continued to wear the grey uniform with black facings down to 1908, although some companies of the 3rd Battalion appear at one time to have worn red facings. The Artillery uniform was blue with scarlet facings and scarlet cord. The Engineer Volunteers wore a scarlet uniform with blue facings and white cord. The uniform of the Bearer Company was blue with facings of dull cherry.†

There was no common badge for the Volunteers in the early days; they had no cap badge or ornament to show their connection with a particular district or battalion. To remedy this to some extent, the 1st (Bath) Somerset Rifles wore the arms of Bath on the cross-belt. Similarly, the Wells Corps used the arms of the City. But how far this was adopted by other Corps we have not been able to discover.‡

The Volunteers formed in 1859 were not permitted to carry colours. The contention was that they were Rifle Volunteers, and as the Rifle Regiments of the Regular Army did not carry colours

\* We come to this conclusion after careful consideration of the Duke of Cumberland's dispatch published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1746. This shows that the rebels did not come within 100 yards of the Regiment. The casualty list also shows that there were no officers or men of the Regiment killed or wounded in the battle. There seems to be nothing to commemorate but the place of honour which the Regiment occupied.

† *Army Lists*.

‡ We are indebted to Captain W. Lewis for the particulars of the badges of the (1st) Bath Somerset R.V.C. The note about the Wells Corps was obtained from the *Taunton Courier*, 22nd February, 1860.

the Rifle Volunteers should conform to the same rule. This connection with the Rifle Regiments appears, however, to have ceased when the units adopted the title and, sometimes, the uniform of the territorial regiment ; and particularly as the prefix "Rifle" was omitted about the same time from official publications dealing with the Volunteers, when they were referred to simply as infantry. But the short and concise paragraph, "Standards and colours are not authorised," was never omitted from the Volunteer Regulations.

In spite of this, however, one of our Volunteer Battalions was presented with some colours. It came about in this way. The Bath Volunteer Regiment, of 1803, was presented with colours by the ladies of Bath, and when the Regiment was disbanded in 1813 they were handed over to the Corporation. The presentation of these colours to the 1st Volunteer Battalion by the Mayor of Bath on Thursday, 23rd June, 1887, formed part of the ceremonies connected with the Jubilee Celebration in Bath.\* The colours are now in the possession of the 4th Battalion Somerset L.I., and are carefully preserved at the Drill Hall, Lower Bristol Road, Bath.

In place of colours, the majority of the Corps raised in 1859 end 1860 were presented with silver bugles by local ladies and gentlemen of influence. Many of these bugles are still in existence. Some are known to be in the possession of private individuals, and it is suggested that they should be handed over to the successors of the Volunteers, the 4th and 5th Battalions Somerset L.I., as a token of appreciation of the public services rendered by these units.

The command of a Volunteer Unit was an appointment of great responsibility. The commanding officer was not only responsible for the recruiting, general welfare and training of his unit, but the property of the unit was vested in him ; he was responsible for the leasing and maintenance of drill halls and stores ; he had to provide clothing, equipment and meet many other expenses from the Capitation Grant of 30s. Very often when the grant was exceeded the deficit was made good out of his own pocket. One can therefore imagine how welcome was the provision in the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, 1907, to establish a County Association to relieve the Commanding Officer of these more onerous duties. We feel it is due to Commanding Officers of Volunteer Units to record this, for it was frequently due to their generosity that the units were able to carry on.

\* *Bath Daily Chronicle*, 24th June, 1887.

## PART III. (1908-1914).

### CHAPTER I.

#### RECENT LEGISLATION.

THE Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, 1907 (7 Edward VII., Cap. 9), altered completely the aspect of the Militia, the Yeomanry, and the Volunteer Force. Twenty-three Militia Regiments were disbanded, and the remainder were transferred to the Special Reserve, the new force which was designed to be the premier body of the Army Reserve. The Yeomanry and Volunteer Units were merged into the Territorial Force by the officers and men accepting commissions or enlisting in the new Force. Those who did not do so relinquished their commissions or were discharged, as the case may be. Although the term "Yeomanry" was still applied to the Territorial Cavalry Regiments, they no longer formed a separate auxiliary force. The only auxiliary force in the United Kingdom was the Territorial Force.

The most important section of the Act was that which established a Territorial Force Association in every County. These Associations were constituted under schemes drawn up by the Army Council, and the following duties were assigned to them by the Act :—

- (a) "The organisation of the units of the Territorial Force and their administration (including maintenance) at all times other than when they are called out for training or actual military service or when embodied :
- (b) The recruiting for the Territorial Force both in peace and in war and defining the limits of recruiting areas :
- (c) The provision and maintenance of rifle ranges, buildings, magazines and sites for camps for the Territorial Force :
- (d) Facilitating the provision of areas to be used for manœuvres :
- (e) Arranging with employers of labour as to holidays for training, and ascertaining the times of training best suited to the circumstances of the civil life ;
- (f) Establishing or assisting cadet battalions and corps and also rifle clubs, provided that no financial assistance out of money voted by Parliament shall be given by an Associa-

tion in respect of a parliamentary grant until such person has attained the age of sixteen :

- (g) The provision of horses for the peace requirements of the Territorial Force :
- (h) Providing accommodation for the safe custody of arms and equipment :
- (i) The supply of the requirements on mobilization of the units of the Territorial Force within the county, in so far as those requirements are directed by the Army Council to be met locally, such requirements where practicable to be embodied in regulations which shall be issued to county associations from time to time, and on the first occasion not later than the first day of January, one thousand nine hundred and nine :
- (j) The payment of separation and other allowances to the families of men of the Territorial Force when embodied or called out on actual military service :
- (k) The registration in conjunction with the military authorities of horses for any of His Majesty's forces :
- (l) The care of reservists and discharged soldiers."\*

The cost of carrying out these duties were to be met from grants made by the Army Council from money voted by Parliament for army services.† The grants could be drawn upon from time to time during the year after a statement of the Association's requirements had been submitted.

The schemes drawn up by the Army Council were to provide for the incorporation of Associations, the constitution of Lord-Lieutenants of Counties as Presidents, and the appointment of members and staff. First appointments to Territorial commissions were to be submitted through Associations so that Lord-Lieutenants would retain their ancient right of nominating gentlemen for commissions in the auxiliary forces.‡

The remainder of the Act provided for the government, discipline and pay of the Force, enlistment, application of the Army Act to the Force, and training.

It provided for certain civil rights and exemptions. For example, a Member of Parliament does not lose his seat by virtue

\* Section II., para. 2, of the Act.

† Section III.

‡ Section I., para. 3.

of any commission he might hold in the Territorial Force. An officer, who is a sheriff and is embodied, need not perform the duties of his civil office during embodiment. Nor can an officer or man of the Territorial Force be punished for absence during the time he is voting in a Parliamentary election. In England officers or men cannot be compelled to serve as peace or parish officers, and can claim to have their names omitted from jury lists. But if their names are on the list and they are called they cannot claim exemption from jury service.\*

The effect of this Act was to place the old Volunteer Force on a level with the Militia as regards service and training, retaining of course the purely voluntary form of enrolment. That it resulted in greatly increasing the efficiency of the old Volunteers is evident from the quickness with which it was possible to send fully trained Territorial units overseas in 1914.

The Act of 1907, although it abolished the Volunteer Force as such, did not repeal any Act of Parliament which permitted the raising of Volunteers. This enabled the Government in 1916 to recognise the Volunteer Training Corps under the Act of 1863, and to consolidate them into a Volunteer Force. Previous to this they were unofficial organisations supported by private subscriptions.

In 1921 a short but important Act, called the Territorial Army and Militia Act, 1921 (11 and 12 Geo. V., Ch. 37) was passed. Section I. provided that "the Territorial force which His Majesty is empowered to raise and maintain under Part II. of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, 1907, shall be called the territorial army, and accordingly that Act and any other enactment, Royal warrant, proclamation, order, regulation, or document applying to the territorial force shall have effect as though references therein to the territorial army were substituted for references to the territorial force." This statute repealed many of the old Acts, including the Act of 1804.

This important change in status of the Territorial Force was made in recognition of its extremely valuable services in the Great War. In spite of this Act, however, the legal title of the County Association is still Territorial Force Association.

The reason is that the schemes under which Associations were incorporated have never been amended.

\* Section XXII, and *Manual of Military Law*, Chap. XII., para. 8.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE SOMERSET COUNTY ASSOCIATION.

**O**N the 6th November, 1907, the Marquess of Bath, Lord Lieutenant of the County of Somerset, convened a meeting in Bath of the Officers Commanding Somerset Volunteer Units, the Chairman of the County Council, and the Mayor and Mayor-Elect of Bath. There also attended the meeting F. D. Acland, Esq., M.P., Private Secretary to Mr. (now Lord) Haldane, and Brigadier-General W. S. Kirkpatrick.

The model scheme for the establishment of the County Association was read to the meeting. It was decided to suggest to the Army Council that the Somerset Association should consist of thirty members—a President, fifteen military members, that is to say, officers of Territorial Force units raised in the County, five representatives of the County Council, one representative of the County Borough of Bath, and eight co-opted members representative of various interests and bodies connected with the new force.

Lieut.-Colonel R. Mildmay Clerk, of Charlton House, Shepton Mallet, was appointed Chairman of the Association. Offices were established at 39, Gay Street, Bath, and on the 11th January, 1908, the approved scheme for the "Establishment and Constitution of a Territorial Force Association for the County of Somerset" was received from the War Office. The date given in the scheme for the formal Incorporation of the Association was 31st December, 1907.\*

The first Members of the County Association were : *President*, Colonel T.H. Marquess of Bath, Royal Wilts Yeomanry ; *Chairman*, Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Clerk, retired, Indian Army ; *Vice-Chairman*, Colonel H. P. Kirkwood ; *Military Members*, Colonel W. Barrett, West Somerset Yeomanry ; Colonel H. F. Clutterbuck, V.D., 4th Batt. Somerset L.I. ; Lieut.-Colonel A. W. Dalby, 2nd S.W. Mtd. Brigade Field Ambulance ; Captain C. P. L. Edwards, formerly

\* Minute Book of the Association.

3rd Vol. Batt. Somerset L.I. ; Major R. J. B. Hippisley, North Somerset Yeomanry ; Lieut.-Colonel S. Keen, Wessex Divisional Engineers ; Major A. L. Langman, C.M.G., North Somerset Yeomanry ; Colonel W. Marsh, V.D., 5th Batt. Somerset L.I. ; Lieut.-Colonel E. H. Openshaw, 4th Batt. Somerset L.I. ; Major A. H. Peace, S.W. Brigade Company A.S.C. ; Lieut.-Colonel G. S. Pollard, V.D., 4th Batt. Somerset L.I. ; Colonel W. M. Sherston, D.S.O., North Somerset Yeomanry ; Major F. N. Q. Shuldhham, West Somerset Yeomanry ; Captain A. E. Y. Trestrail, 6th Batt. Gloucestershire Regiment, formerly 1st Vol. Batt. Royal Sussex Regiment ; and Colonel H. B. Patton, C.B., formerly 2nd Vol. Batt. Somerset L.I. ; *Representative Members (County Council)*, F. S. Arnold, Esq., T. S. Bradford, Esq., The Hon. E. W. B. Portman, D.L., J.P., P. K. Stothert, Esq., J.P., and Colonel The Right Hon. W. F. Earl Waldegrave, V.D., late 1st London Volunteer Rifle Corps ; (*County Borough of Bath*), The Mayor for the time being ; *Co-opted Members*, Colonel M. Locke Blake, formerly 2nd Vol. Batt. Somerset L.I. ; Colonel E. Clayton ; F. H. Fox, Esq., J.P. ; Major J. W. Gifford, 5th Batt. Somerset L.I. ; Major C. B. St. John Mildmay, 4th Batt. Somerset L.I. ; and J. C. H. Walton, Esq.\*

The first meeting of the Association was held at the Guildhall, Bath, on Saturday, 25th January, 1908. Major A. G. Boyle, West Somerset Yeomanry, who had acted as Secretary to the preliminary Committee, was appointed Secretary of the Association. The appointment of Sergt.-Major J. Hills, 4th Batt. Somerset Light Infantry, and Mr. H. Tett as Clerks was also confirmed.

The Association immediately set about their many tasks with energy. Not only were the existing Volunteer units to be re-organised, but many new units were to be raised. District Committees were formed, and recruiting meetings were organised throughout the county. Many other things had also to be considered : the supply of clothing and equipment, the purchase of horses, and the improvement of existing, and building of new, drill halls and rifle ranges. The employers of labour had also to be approached in order to secure facilities for Territorials to attend their drills and annual camp.

The Association selected the Wessex Dragon as their Common Seal. They were influenced in their decision by the fact that the

\* Copied, with one or two amendments, from the Army List, April, 1909.

Somerset County Council had also adopted the dragon for their seal.\* But the selection had a much deeper significance, though perhaps not realised at the time. The dragon was probably introduced into Britain by the Romans during the 4th century. It was, without doubt, adopted as a standard or emblem by the Romanised Britons, and in A.D. 752 we find it to be the Royal Standard of Ethelbald, King of the Mercians. Ethelbald was defeated that year by Cuthred, King of the West Saxons, who paid him tribute, and his standard was captured. Thereafter the Golden Dragon of Wessex formed the Royal Standard of the West Saxons.† In time of war it drew the man from his plough, the miller from his mill, and the retainer from his lord's household, even as Territorials are to-day drawn from their civil occupations at the threat of war. Though armies do not now carry standards or colours into battle, it is nevertheless fitting that the Somerset Territorial Force Association should select as their Common Seal the figure which had waved over men of the County when fighting for their liberties centuries ago.

In an extraordinary short time the Association overcame their many difficulties and carried on smoothly and uneventfully with the well-ordered routine of peace. On the 30th June, 1912, Lieut.-Colonel A. G. Boyle met with an untimely death as the result of an accident. At a Special Meeting of the Association, held on 9th August, Major F. M. E. Kennedy, West Somerset Yeomanry, was appointed Secretary, and he assumed the duties of his new office on 14th August, 1912. In the interregnum the work of the Association office had been under the supervision of Colonel Fletcher, the Secretary of the Wiltshire T.F.A. Major Kennedy resigned in 1923, owing to the numerous calls other public work made upon his time. Lieut.-Colonel C. D. G. Lyon, D.S.O., was appointed Secretary in his place, and assumed the duties on the 1st September, 1923.

On 17th December, 1913, the office of the Association was transferred to Taunton. A large part of the old Wilton Prison had

\* The County Council at this time had not been granted its present coat of arms : Or, with dragon rampant gules bearing a mace azure. This grant was made in 1912. The dragon was adopted as a seal only in 1906. The red dragon was the badge of our semi-mythical King Arthur, but the West Saxons always bore a Golden Dragon.

† Camden's Britannia. Claudianus, the Roman poet, speaks of " Exalted banners wrought with dragon's heads."

been purchased in 1909 from the Somerset County Council.\* The existing buildings were altered considerably, all the cells in one wing were removed, the shell thus left providing a spacious drill hall. Quarters for the married Permanent Staff Instructors were built. In another wing of the prison three stories of cells were altered into two stories, providing roomy storerooms above and airy offices below. And so, where men had once lived their "durance vile," typewriters now are busy, and the insatiable demand of the War Office for forms and statements and returns is met.

A portion of the Association Office had always been established in the County Territorial Hall, as the Prison is now called ; for in 1909 the Central Clothing Store had been created there. Captain T. C. Lawson was in charge as Superintendent of Clothing, and he had the assistance of ex-Col.-Sergt. C. Hartnell.

Sergt.-Major J. Hills did not move with the Association to Taunton, and he was succeeded in his appointment by Col.-Sergt. W. Codrington. The latter had for many years been Permanent Staff Instructor to the Volunteers and Territorials at Keynsham.

The move to Taunton was very necessary. The offices at 39, Gay Street, Bath, consisted of two rooms. These would have proved totally inadequate had the Territorial Force been embodied ; which would have entailed a considerable expansion of the Association to cope with the great task of issuing separation and other allowances to the wives and dependants of men called up. As it was, when the catastrophe of war came in 1914 the Association was ready. Spare rooms were turned into offices, and the metamorphosis from peace to war conditions was brought about without a hitch.

\* The County Council has the right to re-purchase should the premises cease to be used for military purposes within a period of "20 years after the demise of the youngest living descendant of His Majesty King Edward VII., who succeed him."

## CHAPTER III.

## RE-ORGANIZATION OF UNITS.

**W**HEN the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, 1907, came into force on the 1st April, 1908, there existed in Somerset : The North Somerset Imperial Yeomanry ; The West Somerset Imperial Yeomanry ; four companies of the 1st Gloucestershire R.G.A. ; two companies of the Devon and Somerset Volunteer Engineers ; the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Volunteer Batts. Somerset L.I. ; and a Section of Stretcher Bearers. The total establishment was 136 officers and 3,798 other ranks.

Under the Act Somerset was required to find :—

2 Regiments of Yeomanry .. .. ..	58 officers.	888 other ranks.
1 Battery of Royal Horse Artillery and Ammunition Column .. .. ..	7     "	317     "
2 Field Companies of Royal Engineers ..	12     "	420     "
2 Battalions of Infantry .. .. ..	58     "	1,960     "
A Mounted Brigade Transport and Supply Column .. .. .. ..	4     "	97     "
1 Company of Divisional Transport and Supply Column .. .. ..	4     "	97     "
Headquarters of a Mounted Brigade ..	4     "	"
Headquarters of an Infantry Brigade ..	4     "	"
Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance ..	6     "	103     "
Army Veterinary Service .. .. ..	4     "	"
Divisional Telegraph Company .. .. ..	2     "	38     "
Army Postal Service .. .. ..		6     "

Soon after the establishment of the County Association the Army Council drew up a scheme for the enrolment of a Corps of Guides in each County. The members were to be men who possessed an exceptional knowledge of the districts in which they lived. In the event of this country being invaded they would be utilised as Guides to bodies of troops operating in their areas. The scheme fell through, however.

As the County was required to find two Regiments of Yeomanry it was possible to retain both the Somerset Regiments. From this time the word " Imperial " in their titles, which had been included

after the South African War, dropped out. Both Regiments were reorganised in four squadrons.

The four squadrons of the North Somerset Yeomanry were established at Shepton Mallet, Bath, Bedminster, and Weston-super-Mare. The headquarters of the Bedminster squadron had been established in the City of Bristol, but were now brought within the county boundary.

The headquarters of the West Somerset Yeomanry squadrons were established at Taunton, Bridgwater, Wellington, and Yeovil. The West Somerset Yeomanry made a great effort to prevent the Dorset Yeomanry recruiting in Yeovil, a privilege that regiment had enjoyed for many years. The matter was brought up in the House of Commons, when it was stated that recruiting should be confined to the respective counties. But in spite of this the Dorset Yeomanry continued to maintain a drill station in Yeovil.

It was at first decided to raise the Somerset R.H.A. and the Ammunition Column as one unit, and to divide them later. As this was found to be impracticable, the Ammunition Column was allotted to Portishead, and there the personnel were enrolled. The headquarters of the Battery were located at Taunton, and drill stations were created at Yeovil, Shepton Mallet, Bath, Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon. But most of the battery was raised in Taunton.

The three Volunteer Battalions were divided into two Territorial Battalions of eight companies each. The latter became known as the 4th and 5th Battalions Prince Albert's Somersetshire Light Infantry. Two companies of the 4th Battalion were located in Bath, others at Midsomer Norton and Frome, while half companies were established at Keynsham and Brislington, to form one company; Shepton Mallet and Castle Cary, to form another; Wells and Glastonbury, to form a seventh Company; and Weston-super-Mare and Winscombe to form the eighth Company.

The 5th Battalion established its headquarters at Taunton, which provided a company with detachments at Wellington and Wiveliscombe. Other companies were formed at Bridgwater (with a detachment at Burnham), Minehead, Williton, Yeovil, Chard, Crewkerne, and Langport. The last-named company had detachments at South Petherton and Somerton. A detachment of the Chard Company was afterwards raised at Ilminster.

The Mounted Brigade T. and S. Column and the Company of Divl. T. and S. Column were at first raised as one unit of two companies, the headquarters being at Bridgwater. But the Mounted Brigade T. and S. Column was afterwards allocated to Weston-super-Mare, with a drill station at Wedmore.

The two companies of Engineers were retained, but were named the 1st and 2nd Field Companies, Wessex Divisional Engineers. The 1st Field Company was stationed at Bath and had a detachment at Long Ashton. The headquarters of the 2nd Field Company were established at Weston-super-Mare, and a detachment of the company was raised at Clevedon. The Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance was raised at Frome and Bath, the former being the headquarters.

The Mounted Brigade Headquarters, although allocated to Somerset, was raised by the Hampshire Territorial Association. Similarly, the Divisional Telegraph Company was formed in Devon. These changes were necessitated either through lack of suitable accommodation or, as in the case of the Telegraph Company, inability to secure the particular type of man required for such a specialist unit.

Great efforts were made to retain a Company of R.G.A. in the County. The County Association asked Devon and Hampshite to accept the Clevedon Company as part of their quota of Garrison Artillery, but without success. The Clevedon Company, therefore, had to accept the fate of the other R.G.A. Companies, and was disbanded. The Company's guns (two 40 pounder B.L.) were presented to the town, and now adorn Dial Hill.

About the time of the introduction of the Territorial Force there sprang up an organisation called the Veteran Reserve. It consisted of ex-officers and men of the Regular and Auxiliary Forces who registered their names as willing to enlist, in whatever capacity they might be required, in the event of grave national danger. The Veteran Reserve Register for Somerset was kept by the County Territorial Association, who fostered the movement as much as they were able.

Although considerable pressure was brought to bear, the War Office would not recognise the organisation. In 1913, however, the Army Council authorised the formation of the National Reserve, and the members of the Veteran Reserve were invited to transfer.

The new body was organised under the auspices of the County Associations, and the condition of membership was the same as in the Veteran Reserve, except that men were registered in three classes.

*Class I.* consisted of officers and men under 42 years of age, who were fit for combatant service in the field at home or abroad.

*Class II.* embraced all officers, warrant officers and sergeants under 55 years of age, and rank and file under 50, fit for home defence, duty in fixed positions, or for administrative work.

*Class III.* comprised those unable to undertake any particular obligation.

The National Reserve in Somerset was organised in two Battalions, the 1st (West) Somerset National Reserve, and the 2nd (North) Somerset National Reserve.

The County was required to find 4 officers and 100 men of Class I., who were to be registered for service with the 3rd (Special Reserve) Batt. Somerset L.I. This quota was divided equally between the two battalions. As regards Class II. each Battalion was authorised to register 32 officers and 853 other ranks. On the 31st March, 1914, there were registered :—

#### 1ST (WEST) BATTALION SOMERSET N.R.

Class I.	..	..	2 officers	..	83 other ranks
Class II.	..	..	18 "	..	815 "
Class III.	..	..	31 "	..	560 "
			—		—
			51		1,458

#### 2ND (NORTH) BATTALION SOMERSET N.R.

Class I.	..	..	3 officers	..	159 other ranks
Class II.	..	..	22 "	..	687 "
Class III.	..	..	33 "	..	310 "
			—		—
			58		1,156

Major-General Sir Henry Hallam Parr, K.C.B., C.M.G., was appointed Commandant of National Reserves for the County. On his death, on the 4th April, 1914, he was succeeded by Colonel H. B. Patton, C.B., V.D. Colonel E. St. Clair Pemberton, formerly of the Royal Engineers, was appointed Staff Officer for National Reserves in Somerset.

The 1st (West) Somerset N.R. was under the command of Colonel H. A. Walsh, C.B., who was succeeded in 1914 by Colonel S. H. Wodehouse. Lieut.-Colonel F. G. Parsons, D.S.O., was the first C.O. of the 2nd (North) Somerset N.R. He resigned in 1914, and was succeeded by Brig.-General A. E. Ommaney, C.B. The headquarters of these two units were at Taunton and Bath respectively.

The cost of the National Reserve was met by the County Association, who received grants annually from the Army Council for the purpose. The members who fulfilled their obligation to enlist on the outbreak of war also received gratuities, the amounts varying according to their class in the National Reserve.

## CHAPTER IV.

## COLOURS, UNIFORMS, ETC.

**O**N becoming Territorials the Somerset Infantry units ceased to have the status of Rifle Regiments. This allowed them to carry colours. The colours could not, however, be provided or maintained from public money, and the Marquess and Marchioness of Bath, therefore, made an appeal to the people of Somerset to provide the necessary funds. The response was as prompt and abundant as in the days of the Napoleonic Wars.

In addition to the 4th and 5th Battalions, the North Somerset Yeomanry became entitled to a guidon, as that unit had adopted the dress and appointments of dragoons. The guidon and colours were designed by the Herald's College, and were made by Messrs. Hobson & Sons, of 1, Lexington St., Golden Square, W.

The guidon of the Yeomanry is of crimson silk damask, fringed with gold. It is mounted on a lance surmounted by the Royal Crest, the whole being 8 feet 6 inches in length. The tassels and cords are of crimson silk and gold mixed. The title of the regiment is embroidered on the guidon in letters of gold on a red ground within a circle. The whole is surrounded with a wreath of roses, thistles and shamrocks, ensigned with the Imperial Crown. Beneath is a scroll bearing the regiment's battle honour, "South Africa, 1900-01."

The colours of the 4th and 5th Battalions are alike, except for the distinguishing numbers in Roman numerals in the dexter canton (top left-hand corner). The King's colour is the Union Flag. In the centre is a circle around which is embroidered in letters of gold, "Somersetshire Light Infantry"; within the circle is, "The Prince Albert's." The whole is surmounted by the Imperial Crown.

The regimental colour is of Royal blue, the colour of the facings of the uniform. In the centre are the crown, circle and titles as on the King's Colour, the whole being surrounded by a wreath of roses, thistles and shamrocks on a single stalk. Beneath is a scroll

bearing the battle honour, "South Africa, 1900-01." Beneath this again is the "United Red and White Rose," barbed and seeded.

The colours are of silk mounted on pikes, surmounted by the Royal Crest, the whole being 8 feet 7½ inches in length. The cords and tassels are crimson and gold mixed. The fringe of the King's Colour is of gold and crimson silk, and that of the Regimental Colour is blue and gold. The guidon and colours were presented to escorts of the North Somerset Yeomanry and 4th and 5th Battalions by King Edward VII., at Windsor, on the 19th June, 1909.

On the 22nd June, 1909, the Prince and Princess of Wales visited Wells and Glastonbury in connection with the Millenary Celebrations at Wells and the Rededication of Glastonbury Abbey. Mounted escorts were found by the North Somerset Yeomanry at Wells, and the West Somerset Yeomanry at Glastonbury. Guards of Honour were found by the 4th and 5th Batts. at Wells, and another by the 4th Batt. at Glastonbury. Other Territorials were employed in lining the streets. Altogether, there were at Wells 27 officers and 689 other ranks, under the command of Colonel H. F. Clutterbuck, and 26 officers and 743 other ranks at Glastonbury, under Colonel W. Marsh. Refreshments for the men were provided by the people of the two towns.

It was a very wet day, and the King's Colours of the 4th and 5th Battalions were stained with mud when dipped in salute. But these stains are looked upon with considerable pride, for they are reminders of the fact that the colours of the 4th and 5th Battalions were the first Territorial colours in the Kingdom to salute members of the Royal Family.

The 1st (West) Somerset National Reserves also had colours. They were provided from funds raised by Mrs. Whittingham, wife of the Mayor of Taunton, the subscribers being ladies of West Somerset. The colours were presented by Mrs. (now Lady) Boles in Vivary Park, Taunton, on the 4th August, 1914, the day Great Britain declared war. These colours were never consecrated, and therefore can never be deposited in a Church. When the National Reserves were called upon for service the colours were handed over to the County Territorial Association, and as the unit has never been revived the Association remain their custodians. In 1922 the colours were handed to Colonel S. H. Wodehouse to be held by him during his lifetime. On his death they will be returned to the Association.

The uniforms of the units also underwent a change in 1908. The uniform of the North Somerset Yeomanry followed approximately that of the 6th Dragoon Guards. It consisted of a blue cap with a white collar and chains on the shoulders. The latter form a connecting link with the chain mail which preceded the heavy and cumbersome armour of the mediæval knights. Shoulder chains were introduced as protection against sabre slashes. The North Somersets wore blue pantaloons with putties of the same colour. Down each of the outer seams of the pantaloons were two stripes of white braid. In this the uniform failed to be consistent with the Dragoon model—to have been consistent, a single stripe only should have been introduced.

The West Somerset Yeomanry uniform consisted of a blue cap with a scarlet band and scarlet piping. The jacket was a plain blue without braid or piping of any kind. Overalls of blue were worn, with a double white stripe down the seams.

The uniform of the Somerset R.H.A. was the most attractive of all. It comprised a blue shell-jacket with a scarlet collar and scarlet braid across the breast and down the back; a scarlet busby line further embellished it. The pantaloons were blue with a wide scarlet stripe, and blue putties were also worn.

The walking-out dress of the other county units was similar to that of their affiliated regiments of the Regular Army. But where the Regular Army wore gold lace, the Territorial Force wore silver; and white metal buttons and ornaments took the place of the gilt buttons, etc., of the Regulars. The 5th Batt. Somerset L.I., however, had permission to wear gold lace and gilt buttons, etc. This permission had no special significance for any other unit could have secured the privilege by asking for it.

Another distinctive feature of the Territorial uniforms was to be found in the cap badges. Territorial units wore the cap badge of their affiliated Regular unit, but any honours incorporated in the badge were omitted. The Somerset R.H.A., therefore, wore the badge of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, but the honour, "Ubique," was omitted from the scroll which surmounts the gun. In the case of the 4th and 5th Battalions Somerset L.I. they wore the bugle (symbolising Light Infantry) with the mural crown, which is associated with Jellalabad, but on the scroll above, "South Africa, 1900-01," was substituted for "Jellalabad."

These differences are recorded here for the important reason that, in recognition of the inestimable value of the services of Territorials in the Great War, they are now allowed to participate in all the honours and distinctions of their affiliated Regular Regiments. It is scarcely necessary to say that the glorious traditions of our Army, indelibly impressed in the history of the British Empire, will be perpetuated and made even more honourable by our citizen soldiers.

## PART IV. (THE GREAT WAR).

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE COUNTY ASSOCIATION.

THE tremendous excitement which animated all sections of the community in August, 1914, did not to any great extent affect the Association staff at Taunton. Everyone was calm ; everything was ready for the great change from a peace to a war footing. August 4th was a day of waiting, waiting for the important but cryptic telegram—"Mobilize."

The telegram was received at 5.15 p.m. Immediately the work of the staff was adjusted to meet the new order of things. Arrangements were made to issue separation allowances to the wives and dependants of the Territorials who were embodied. The increased staff necessary to deal with this branch of the Association's war work at first consisted of five clerks ; but as the work increased, so the staff was augmented until upwards of twenty clerks were employed on the issue of allowances to wives, motherless children and other dependants of serving Territorials. Throughout the war the work of the Separation Allowance Department was under the supervision of Mr. W. Codrington.

In the case of men undergoing annual training at the time of the Declaration of War, the separation allowances were issued as from the 4th August. For those men who were embodied the following day the allowances commenced on the 5th. Men were allowed to allot part of their pay for the benefit of their wives and dependants. On the 1st November, 1914, allowances to needy dependants were issued. The total number of persons who received payments from the Somerset Territorial Association probably exceeded 18,000. The highest number of payees on the books at any one time was in April, 1917, when family allowances were paid to 4,264, and dependants' allowances to 5,084, a total of 9,348. The cost of issuing allowances throughout the war averaged about £3 10s. per week per 1,000 cases.

Major Kennedy was early embarrassed in the Clothing Department by the resignation of Captain Lawson, who obtained a good post in the new armies which were being raised. The difficulty was soon surmounted, however, by the appointment of Hon. Lieutenant and Quartermaster A. May, 4th Batt. Somerset L.I., as Superintendent of Clothing. Next to the issue of separation allowances, the issue of clothing in the early days of the war was the most important task of the Association. With commendable foresight the contractors had been ordered, before the declaration of war, to supply 1,800 suits of uniform. These were promptly delivered and augmented from time to time, so that very soon all the storerooms were filled to the roof, and bales of clothing and boxes of boots were stored in the passages and landings of the old prison.

An adequate idea of the tremendous work of the Clothing Department can only be given by relating one of many incidents. A new army Battalion of the North Staffordshire Regiment was sent into camp at Okehampton. The men were in civilian clothes in various stages of dismemberment. One day, about 4 p.m., the Somerset Territorial Association received a telegram to send them immediately 2,000 suits. Many willing hands set about the task. By 8 p.m. that same day the complete order was on rail for Okehampton. Next day the Officer Commanding the North Staffordshire Battalion wired that 2,000 jackets, trousers and putties had been received, not one more, not one less.

From the 28th June, 1917, the clothing of Territorial Infantry recruits was carried out by the Regular Depots of their affiliated regiments. The Association's Clothing Store, therefore, ceased to exist as an issuing store for the Territorial Force.

Another important function of the Association was the recruiting for the units under their administration. At first recruits came forward in great numbers. The Territorial Recruiting Staffs were also helped by the fact that the majority of men preferred to join Territorial units, although this did not prevent the most friendly co-operation between the Territorial and Regular Army Recruiting Staffs. It must be remembered that in addition to finding the recruits for increasing and maintaining the units on the Peace Establishment of the County, known as the First Line, the Association had also to raise the personnel of the new Territorial units, the Second and Third Lines. But it soon became evident that voluntary

recruiting would not provide the vast number of men needed for the world war. As early as the beginning of 1915 married men with families were coming forward while young unmarried ones held aloof. Recognising the unfairness of this, the Somerset Association at a meeting held at Taunton, on 13th April, 1915, adopted a resolution advocating compulsory service during the war. It was one of the first public bodies in the country to do this.

On the 10th February, 1916, the first Military Service Act came into force. Thereafter the Association had nothing to do with recruiting. The voluntary recruiting in Somerset, so far as it relates to Somerset Territorial units, is best illustrated by the following figures. These indicate the number of men enlisted in Somerset Territorial units from the beginning of the war to the last week in April, 1916 :—

Somerset Battery R.H.A. and Ammunition Column	..	..	257
North Somerset Yeomanry	..	..	1,258
West Somerset Yeomanry	..	..	1,022
Wessex Field Companies R.E.	..	..	1,358
4th Batt. Somerset Light Infantry	..	..	2,053
5th Batt. Somerset Light Infantry	..	..	1,889
2nd S.W. Mounted Brigade A.S.C.	..	..	94
S.W. Infantry Brigade A.S.C.	..	..	201
2nd S.W. Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance	..	..	204
2nd S.W. Mounted Brigade Signal Troop	..	..	—
Wessex Divl. Mobile Vet. Section	..	..	36
Wessex Divl. Veterinary Hospital	..	..	125
Supernumerary T.F. Companies (National Reserve)	..	..	1,149
<hr/>			<hr/>
Total	..	..	9,646

As the Association were relieved of certain duties, others were entrusted to them. Early in the war Volunteer Training Corps had been formed throughout the county, and in 1916 these were recognised by the Army Council and organised into two Battalions. The County Association administered these, and other Volunteer Units which were raised later, providing their uniform and paying all their expenses in connection with training, &c.

The grants made to the Association to cover the cost of the Volunteers were totally inadequate, and the County Council was asked to assist with a money grant. But the County Council would not. The following District Councils made grants with the proviso that they should be expended to the benefit of the Volunteers in their respective Districts :—

Keynsham R.D.C.	..	..	..	..	£50
Midsomer Norton U.D.C.	..	..	..	..	20
Weston-super-Mare U.D.C.	..	..	..	..	50
Axbridge R.D.C.	..	..	..	..	50
Clevedon R.D.C.	..	..	..	..	20

In March, 1917, Mr. H. Tett, who had served on the Association Staff since 1908, was released for military service. His place was taken by Mr. W. G. Fisher.

For the remainder of the war the Association were occupied with the issue of separation allowances, the administration of the Volunteer Force, and the development of the Cadet Force. Their real value cannot be estimated by mere figures or bald accounts. The Association formed a liaison between the civilian element in the County and the military authorities ; and when the latter wished to approach the former, or *vice versa*, the Association formed the best medium.

In September, 1914, Lord Kitchener asked the Association to assist in the billeting of the men of the new armies. As an experiment a Committee of the Association was formed in Bath. It proved very successful, and in a very short time accommodation was found for more than 1,000 men. Again, when the voluntary funds which provided British Prisoners of War with clothing began to dwindle towards the end of the war, it was necessary to provide them with official clothing. The War Office, obviously, could not send this direct, so County Territorial Associations were asked to despatch the clothing. The arrangement did not last long owing to the termination of the war, but up to the 5th November, 1918, the Somerset Association had despatched 1,784 parcels. All the packing of these parcels was done by ladies and gentlemen residing in and around Taunton.

When County War Pensions Committees were first set up, Associations were asked to assist in their establishment. Most of the initial work of the Somerset Committee was carried out by Lieut. A. May, and Major Kennedy was appointed Vice-Chairman and afterwards Chairman. Until the end of the war the Somerset Association also provided the Committee with offices at the County Territorial Hall.

Having regard to its civilian aspect, and the wide military and administrative experience possessed by its staff, it was natural that in those years of distress the County Association should have been

looked upon as a kind of information bureau. The Association welcomed this opportunity to assist with advice and information. The enquiries received were of a most varied nature, some quaint and others painful to read, but in every case the staff spared no pains to give complete satisfaction. Most enquiries were received from the wives and dependants of Territorials, and these the Association regarded as their special charge. No small number of them were personally known to the Separation Allowance Staff through calling in person at the office. Situated in the most accessible town in the County, the old Wilton Prison became the Mecca of all who sought information. And the pilgrims could be found in Major Kennedy's room at all hours of the day.

In recognition of the Association's services the Companionship of the Order of the Bath was awarded to the Marquess of Bath, its President, and to Major Kennedy. Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Clerk, who had been Chairman of the Association from its inception until 14th May, 1918, was awarded the O.B.E. The names of Lieut. A. May, Mr. W. Codrington, Mr. H. Tett, and Mr. W. G. Fisher were also brought to the notice of the Secretary of State for War.

## CHAPTER II.

## NORTH SOMERSET YEOMANRY.\*

**A**T 6.12 p.m., 4th August, 1914, the North Somerset Yeomanry received orders to mobilize. The headquarters in Lower Bristol Road, Bath, was a scene of bustle for the next few days; recruits were enrolled to bring the Regiment up to strength, and horses were inspected and purchased. The recruits were put through an intensive musketry course on Box Rifle Range.

On the 11th August the Regiment left Bath for Winchester. Ten days later they marched out to Forest Row, where training was commenced.

In common with all other Territorial units at this time the North Somerset Yeomanry had a Service unit, known as the first line regiment, and a reserve or second line. The latter was forming at Bath, and was intended to provide reinforcements for the first line. Later on a third line was also raised, but subsequently was amalgamated with a second line. This unit was afterwards converted into a Cyclist Regiment, and for the greater part of the war was stationed on the East Coast and in Ireland.

The first line Regiment, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel G. C. Glyn, D.S.O., was ordered to proceed to France on 26th October. It did not embark until the 2nd November, however. Next day Le Havre was reached,† and the Regiment entrained for Esquerdes, near St. Omer. On the 11th November the North Somersets joined the 6th Cavalry Brigade, in the 3rd Cavalry Division (General, afterwards Lord Byng).

The 6th Cavalry Brigade consisted of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, the Royal Dragoons and the 10th Hussars. Soon afterwards the

\* For much useful information we are indebted to Lieutenant J. B. Bickersteth's *History of the 6th Cavalry Brigade, 1914-1918*, and *A Short Report on the North Somerset Yeomanry during the European War, 1914-1918*. The latter is a pamphlet printed privately by the Regiment.

† After the war every British Regiment which landed at Le Harve received from the townspeople a picture to commemorate their arrival in France.

10th Hussars are transferred to another Brigade. The strength of the North Somerset Yeomanry on joining the Brigade was 26 officers, 467 other ranks, and 498 horses.

On the 15th November, 300 men of the Regiment went into trenches near Ypres. Two hundred of these took over trenches on the Zillebeke-Klien-zillebeke Road, while the remainder occupied dug-outs near Lord Cavan's headquarters. The next day passed off comparatively quietly; but the North Somersets were not destined to have a peaceful introduction to war. At 9 a.m., on the 17th November, the Germans began a heavy and continuous bombardment of the sector which they held. At 1 p.m. the Prussian Guards began to advance. Reaching within twenty yards of the British trenches they were met by a terrific burst of rifle and machine-gun fire, and crumbled. At 3.45 p.m. they advanced once more, this time against the trenches occupied by "B" Squadron, N.S.Y., and "C" Squadron, 3rd Dragoon Guards. The attack was pressed with the utmost determination but, like the first, it failed. The proudest troops in the German Army retired to their trenches, leaving nearly 400 dead in "No Man's Land."

In the repulsing of these attacks Captain F. Liebert and Sec.-Lieut. J. S. Davey were killed, and Captain G. S. Bates (7th Hussars, Adjutant of the N.S.Y.) and Sec.-Lieut. Bailward were wounded. The casualties among the other ranks were also severe.

That night they were relieved and marched back to bivouacs near Vlamertinghe. On the 20th November the 6th Cavalry Brigade marched into billets near Hazebrouck. The North Somerset Yeomanry, with the other units composing the 3rd Cavalry Division, were drawn up on the Hazebrouck-La Motte Road on the 2nd December, and were inspected by H.M. the King, who was accompanied by the Prince of Wales and Sir John French.

On the 3rd February, the North Somersets "bussed" from Steenbecque to Ypres, arriving at 9 p.m., and for the next two days the enemy shelled the town. The Regiment was fortunate in having no casualties.

They took over some trenches S.E. of Zillebeke on the 8th February. We have dignified some shallow ditches by the name of trenches. There was no continuous system, and the isolated posts which existed could not be deepened because the men already stood in water. The enemy was less than 250 yards away. Enemy trench mortars were busy, too, and snow and rain accentuated the

horrors of warfare. On the 11th, Captain E. L. Gibbs was killed, and in the evening the Yeomanry were relieved.

The first gas attack was made on the evening of the 22nd April, and for the fortnight which followed the 6th Cavalry Brigade formed a mobile reserve, marching here and there to support the crumbling British and French lines. On the 5th May the North Somerset Yeomanry provided a working party for the construction of defences East of Ypres. The defences were made at night on the Lille Road, and here Lieut. J. A. Garton and R.-S.-M. Shakespeare were wounded.

Three hundred men of the North Somersets took over the front line on the left of Bellewaerde Lake on the 12th, and accommodated themselves in the shallow holes among the trees which fringed the lake. This position, they were told, they must hold at all costs. The 13th found the men soaked to the skin, for rain had fallen without ceasing for two days. At 1 o'clock in the morning they were warned that the enemy might attack later in the day. There was no protection in the scooped-out holes in which they crouched, and when they asked for sandbags to build up parapets they were told there were none.

At 4 a.m. the enemy bombardment began. Shell after shell burst in the trenches. Men were buried, while others crept out of their shattered ditches and manned the craters the high explosives had made. The dead lay about in all directions. At 5.15 a.m. the shelling ceased, but half-an-hour later the heavens opened once more, and iron and lead rained down with redoubled fury.

The thunder continued long after a feeble dawn had made its appearance. At 7 a.m. the line on the left had fallen back, but the North Somersets with the 3rd Dragoons Guard still clung to their craters and ditches, dazed and shattered though they were. Not one thought of the death that was imminent ; they knew only that they must hang on at all costs, for such were their orders. About 8.30 the enemy swarmed out of his trenches, confident that few men could live through such a cannonade. Few there were, indeed, but the little groups of Yeomen were not dismayed. German bombers were met with bombs, and the wounded picked up their rifles and fired incessantly.

The enemy fell back, and, angered at the repulse, his guns began the shelling once more. About 11 a.m. the bombardment lessened, and the Germans began to concentrate on the left where the line

had weakened. Here most of the fighting for the remainder of the day occurred, and, because the North Somersets had held their ground, the Royal Horse Guards were able to restore the line in the afternoon. About midnight the North Somersets were relieved, having lost more than half their number.

Major W. R. Campbell, D.S.O. (14th Hussars, attached N.S.Y.), Captain S. G. Bates, the Adjutant, and Captain R. E. English, of "B" Squadron, were killed. The officers who were wounded were : Lieut.-Colonel G. C. Glyn, D.S.O., Major H. G. Spencer ("C" Squadron), Major H. B. Matthews (Machine Gun Troop), Major G. Lubbock ("A" Aquadron), Lieut. C. E. Longrigg, Sec.-Lieut. B. F. Hogg, Sec.-Lieut. L. C. Gibbs, and Sec.-Lieut. W. Willis.

On the 29th May they marched into trenches at Hooge, but their number was so small that they were placed in the support trenches. They were relieved on the 5th June. During this period the Regimental Doctor, Lieut. R. O'Kelly, R.A.M.C., was wounded.

Lieut.-Colonel M. R. C. Backhouse, D.S.O., took command of the Regiment on the 18th June, 1915. In the interim the Regiment had been under the command of Captain R. Houston, Royal Dragoons. For the next three months the Regiment was in permanent billets at Estree Blanche, and provided working parties for defences at Neuve Eglise, Sainly and Elverdinghe.

The North Somersets left billets on the 20th September, and marched during the night to the Bois des Dames. The 3rd Cavalry Division, to which they belonged, was held in reserve to exploit, if possible, the success of the carefully planned, but badly managed, attack on Loos.

The great attack was launched on the 25th September. At 8.45 that morning the 6th Cavalry Brigade moved to Vaudricourt, halting at the chateau. Before noon the Brigade was ordered up to Philosophe. Up to this time the British troops had carried all before them, but they were becoming exhausted, and their ranks were thinning under the hail of massed machine gun fire. They looked round for their reserves, and there were none. The only available reserve at that moment was the 3rd Cavalry Division, and that was waiting to make a spectacular gallop when the infantry reached the open country. In the meantime, the enemy was preparing his counter-attacks.

At 11.30 a.m. the 3rd Dragoon Guards and the Royal Dragoons were dismounted and sent into the trenches N.W. of Loos. The North Somerset Yeomanry remained behind in reserve, but later in the day they too were sent to reinforce the infantry to the East of Le Rutoire. The 26th September was a black day for the British troops, who the day before had marched over "No Man's Land" playing mouth organs and kicking footballs. One by one the strong points which had been won—Hill 70, Puit 14 bis and the Chalk Pit—were lost. Loos itself was threatened, and at 3 p.m. the 3rd Dragoon Guards and the Royal Dragoons were ordered to defend it. They advanced on the village with bayonets fixed, and the North Somersets were ordered to reinforce them.

They reached Loos at midnight, after a march over three miles of ground littered with all the debris of war. The exhausted and half-starved infantry were relieved and sent back.

Next day the whole line was subjected to an intense bombardment. But the men who cowered beneath it received some satisfaction in the knowledge that the enemy received as much as he gave. The output of the newly-organised ammunition factories was bearing its first fruits.

On the night of the 27th-28th September the trenches were consolidated, wire was erected and barricades thrown across the roads. On the night of the 29th the Regiment was relieved, took over the horses near Mazingarbe, and marched to bivouacs in the Bois de Dames.

While garrisoning Loos six officers were wounded, also eleven other ranks, and one other rank was missing. The wounded officers were Major W. B. Stewart (Lothian and Border Horse, attached N.S.Y.), Captain W. L. C. Kirby (12th Lancers, Adjutant N.S.Y.), and Sec.-Lieuts. E. A. Green, M. H. Tisdall, G. Babington, and A. G. Little.

The 6th Cavalry Brigade marched to the Ferfay—Cauchy-a-la-Tour—Rainbert area on the 3rd October, and on the 21st went into permanent billets near Honinghem. The North Somersets took over new quarters at Hesmond and Lebiez on the 17th November. Throughout this time digging parties were provided for all sectors of the front line, some being away several days at a time.

Towards the end of December, 1915, the 6th Cavalry Brigade was dismounted and organised as a Battalion, each of its constituent Regiments forming a company of 320 all ranks, with a Machine Gun

Detachment of 4 guns and 42 all ranks. It was known as the 6th (Dismounted) Battalion. Commanded by Lieut.-Col. A. Burt (3rd Dragoon Guards), it entrained at Maresquel on the 3rd January, 1916. The destination was Bethune, but next day the North Somersets were attached to the Royal Engineers as a working party, and were billeted in Noyelles-les-Vermelles.

On the 9th they commenced a tour of trench duty in reserve at Vermelles, and for the remainder of the month took turn about with other units in manning the trenches around the famous Hohenzollern Redoubt. They had their share of all the dangers of trench warfare. On the 11th January the North Somerset Yeomanry bombers raided a sniper's nest and destroyed it. A British mine was sprung on the 23rd, but the enemy occupied the crater. Next day it was bombarded with trench mortars, and when night came on a patrol commanded by Lieut. J. C. Biggs, of the North Somerset Yeomanry, entered it and brought away some rifles and equipment for identification. On the Kaiser's birthday, the 27th January, the Germans heavily bombarded the front and support lines. When it ceased, at 5.15 p.m., three enemy bombing parties made for our trenches. One party had only just got into the open when it was scattered in pieces by one of our shells. Of the others only one man returned : the remainder were shot down ruthlessly.

The 6th Dismounted Battalion left the Hohenzollern Redoubt on the 8th February. During this month of trench warfare the North Somersets had three men killed, fifteen wounded, while one died of wounds.

Towards the end of February the machine guns were withdrawn from the Regiment to form with others a Machine Gun Squadron. Lieutenants M. H. Tisdall and F. B. Ratcliffe were transferred to this new unit. The Regiment marched to Le Touquet on May 1st and went under canvas for training purposes.

The North Somersets found themselves on 24th June in the vast stream of troops moving southward to the Somme. Arriving at Bonnay on the 27th they heard the following day that the great offensive, which was being heralded by an incessant thunder of guns would be postponed for forty-eight hours.

Throughout the whole of the 1st July, while wave upon wave of men were pressing forward over the Somme battlefield, the Yeomanry were saddled up ready to move as soon as the infantry had broken down the German resistance. But that did not happen

for some weeks. The Cavalry were, therefore, employed in clearing up the ground which had been won.

It was on work of this kind that the Regiment was employed until it left the Somme on the 22nd September. The 6th Cavalry Pioneer Battalion was formed on the 20th December, and Lieut.-Colonel M. R. C. Backhouse, D.S.O., was appointed to command it. The Battalion consisted of about 850 all ranks drawn, it is assumed, from the units composing the 6th Cavalry Brigade. It first went to Acheux and later was employed on the railway at Doullens.

Lieut.-Colonel G. H. A. Ing, D.S.O., 2nd Dragoon Guards, took command of the North Somerset Yeomanry on the 21st March, 1917.

In the beginning of April, 1917, the Regiment moved towards Arras, arriving at Fosseux on the 8th. The attack on the Arras front commenced at 5.30 a.m. on the 8th April, and the Cavalry Brigade moved up to the town, passing through in the afternoon. That night the North Somersets erected their bivouacs and lay down to rest. But as the night drew on sleet and snow began to fall, and a strong wind sprang up driving it through the single blanket each man was wrapped in.

Next day they went forward once more and reached the valley South of Feuchy. But the enemy was holding out in Monchy-le-Preux, and they could go no further. Towards evening the North Somersets moved back about a mile and tried to find a place to picquet the horses in a great sea of mud, which had been churned up by countless shells and the passing of many feet. No fires could be lighted, and the men had nothing warm to ward off the bitter cold.

On the 11th the cavalry advanced in the direction of la Bergere. About noon the horses were sent back, and they were ordered to hold the line they had then reached. The North Somersets were in support, and about 2.30 p.m. Major R. A. West's Squadron moved up to reinforce the right flank of the 3rd Dragoon Guards. They took up a position to the South of the Cambrai Road, but were relieved when darkness fell.

During these few days Major W. A. Kennard, D.S.O. (13th Hussars, attached N.S.Y.), Lieut. S. W. Applegate, M.C., and Sec.-Lieuts. K. G. Jenkins and J. H. Hewes were wounded, and among the other ranks, five were killed and seventeen wounded.

The 18th May saw the 6th Cavalry Brigade marching into camp in the beautiful country East of Peronne, and on the 23rd its units

in turn did trench duty in the trenches beyond Epehy. The North Somersets had just relieved the Royal Dragoons on the night of the 27th-28th May when the enemy made a raid. It was pressed with considerable determination, but was repulsed, although the Germans captured a Yeoman.

The Royal Dragoons carried out a big raid on the enemy outposts just before dawn on the 25th June. They were assisted by the North Somerset Yeomanry Scouts, under the command of Lieut. V. C. Rice. The raid was made over 750 yards of ground, covered with "thistles as high as a man's head." The North Somerset Yeomanry Scouts reached the enemy trenches and got to work with bomb and bayonet. Lieut. Rice had his arm smashed early, but disposed of two of the enemy, and stayed till the end of the raid. In addition to Lieut. Rice, the North Somerset Yeomanry had ten men wounded and one "missing."

There was no more active employment until the Battle of Cambrai, on the 20th November, when the 6th Cavalry Brigade was in reserve. When the enemy made his surprise counter-attack on the 30th—Viller Guislain, La Vacquerie and Lateau Wood were taken before anyone behind the line realised they had attacked at all—the Brigade had been transformed into an Infantry Battalion again, but it was not put into the line, and that evening the men were taken by bus to Bernes.

There followed a period of trench duty, during which a great deal of patrol work was carried out. On these occasions, when snow was on the ground, the officers and men in the patrols were dressed in white suits. Towards the end of January, 1918, the North Somersets marched to Tetry, where they were accommodated in Nissen Huts around Couvigny Farm. Here they became engaged in a new type of war-work, one for which the Yeomen of Somerset were well fitted. Large areas of land South-East of Peronne were cultivated, and, although providing working parties for the trenches, the Yeomanry stabled their horses and drove steam ploughs with as much zest as they would over their own farms.

On the 12th March, 1918, the Regiment was transferred to the 8th Cavalry Brigade. It was the intention of the Higher Command to transform it into a Machine Gun Battalion. On passing from his command Brig.-General A. E. W. Harman, D.S.O., Commanding 6th Cavalry Brigade, issued the following Special Order :—

"After bidding farewell to the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the 1/1st North Somerset Yeomanry, I wish to put on record the feelings of regret with which all ranks remaining with the 6th Cavalry Brigade part with the North Somerset Yeomanry.

"Since 13th November, 1914, when they joined the 6th Cavalry Brigade, the North Somerset Yeomanry by their high sense of duty, keenness, and loyalty, by their efficiency in the fighting round Ypres in November, 1914, February, 1915, April, 1915, on the 13th May, 1915; at Loos in September, 1915; at the Hohenzollern Redoubt, January, 1916; and at Monchy-le-Preux, April, 1917, have equally maintained the highest traditions of the Brigade.

"In saying good-bye, and wishing them God-speed to-day, I feel I am voicing the sentiments of all ranks of the Brigade, who, though losing their comrades-in-arms, will ever retain the true spirit of friendship in which they have fought and played together as members of the 6th Cavalry Brigade."

No General could say more than that.

Before the Yeomen could be turned into machine gunners, however, the great German offensive was launched on the 21st March, 1918. The following day Captain G. Babington (North Somerset Yeomanry) returned to the 6th Cavalry Brigade as Staff Captain, and on April 6th the Regiment also returned. But it was not fated to remain a Regiment, for the personnel were distributed among the 3rd Dragoon Guards, the Royal Dragoons and the 10th Hussars. The latter unit had returned to the Brigade after the North Somersets had left.

Throughout the anxious weeks which followed, when the British Army retired day after day, the 6th Cavalry Brigade was moved from point to point, but was never brought in contact with the enemy. When the counter-offensive began on 8th August, however, the Brigade was well to the fore. On the 10th it had reached Parvilliers. It was reported that this village had been captured by the infantry, but the cavalry found it strongly held by the enemy. The place was afterwards taken, but while the Cavalry were held up, there arrived on the scene a company of Whippet Tanks, commanded by Major R. A. West, D.S.O., M.C., a former commander of "B" Squadron, North Somerset Yeomanry. A few days later Major West was killed when commanding his Tanks with an absolute contempt of danger. He won the V.C.

The 6th Cavalry Brigade was held up in a similar way at the village of Honnechy, South-West of Le Cateau. Here the Royal Dragoons, operating to the North of the village, and the 3rd Dragoon Guards, working from the South, made one of the finest cavalry charges in the history of the war. The 3rd Dragoon Guards especially advanced in the face of considerable opposition. High explosives made great gaps in their ranks, while enemy machine guns situated on high ground to their right enfiladed them. In addition enemy aeroplanes followed them up. But on they galloped, beneath a railway bridge where the enemy seemed to have concentrated all his power of destruction. Opening out once more they made straight for the village. Horses and men fell, others stumbled but kept on. They swept through the village and on to the high ground facing Le Cateau. Here they halted to enable the infantry to come up and consolidate.

The Germans steadily retreated from this time onwards, and the Brigade followed them up until on the 10th November they passed through the outskirts of Tournai. At 8.15 a.m. the following day the Brigade had reached the vicinity of Leuze, expecting to come up with the enemy about noon. It had reached Leuze about 10 a.m., when a staff officer arrived with the order that the Armistice would commence at 11 a.m., and hostilities would cease.

We have no story to tell of how the North Somerset Yeomanry, represented by a cadre, returned to be welcomed by their own people. The Regiment ceased to exist when it was distributed among the Regiments of the 6th Cavalry Brigade. But its achievements will long outlive its own existence, and if it had nothing to its credit but that never-to-be-forgotten defence of the shattered trenches at Ypres on the 13th May, 1915, it is entitled to a place in the history of our country and a proud corner in the hearts of all Somerset people.

## CHAPTER III.

## WEST SOMERSET YEOMANRY (12TH BN. SOM. L.I.)\*

**W**HEN war fell upon this country the West Somerset Yeomanry wanted only one officer to bring them up to establishment strength. The actual strength was 23 officers and 638 other ranks, and it is indicative of the popularity of our oldest county auxiliary unit that scores of volunteers for the West Somerset Yeomanry had to be turned away.

By the 12th August the mobilisation of the Regiment was complete, and that night it proceeded under the command of Lieut.-Colonel R. Marriott-Dodington to Winchester. Winchester, the capital of ancient Wessex, was the war station of the 2nd South-Western Mounted Brigade. Besides the West Somerset Yeomanry, there were in this Brigade : The Royal 1st Devon Yeomanry, the Royal North Devon Hussars, 2nd S.W. Mtd. Bde. Field Ambulance (Lieut.-Colonel A. Cary), 2nd S.W. Mtd. Bde. Transport and Supply Column (Major Montgomorie Boyle), and Somerset Battery, Royal Horse Artillery (Lieut.-Colonel F. Aikenhead). The three last named were also Somerset units.

The Brigade was Commanded by Brig.-General R. Hoare, whose Brigade-Major was Captain E. ff. W. Lascelles, and Staff-Captain, Major A. P. Barry, West Somerset Yeomanry.

Few West Somerset Yeomen realised when in Winchester that in their cap badge they bore a symbol to which the place was no stranger. More than 1,000 years before, the Wessex Dragon had waved proudly over the city. It was a fitting station for Somerset men assembling for war.

The stay in Winchester was a short one, for on the 15th August the West Somersets entrained for Colchester. Arriving there they marched to Ardleigh, and took over coast defences from the 1st Batt. Somerset L.I. Many years afterwards these two Regiments met

\* For most of the particulars in this chapter we have had to rely solely on Capt. R. C. Boyle's *A Record of the West Somerset Yeomanry, 1914-1919*. Quotations in the chapter are from this book unless otherwise acknowledged.

again, on 21st June, 1919, their cadres arrived in Taunton by the same train, and were together accorded a civic welcome by the Mayor.

In October the Regimental Headquarters were moved to Great Bentley, and here Lieut.-Colonel R. Marriott-Dodington left to take command of the second line then forming at Taunton. He was succeeded in the command by Major F. N. Quantock Shuldharn, the second-in-command.

The Regiment moved into winter quarters at Tendring Workhouse in November. Whereas before the men had enjoyed a healthy open-air life, they were now crowded into such accommodation as the Workhouse provided, with disastrous results. Influenza broke out, seriously reducing the number available to attend to the horses. The latter also had a far from comfortable time; picqueted for a long time in the open, their lines became a sea of mud, in which the patient animals stood and were fed. It is said a horse's mane was once found floating on the surface of the quagmire, but whether it belonged to a submerged horse was never discovered. The Regiment feared to investigate!

Early in 1915, Major A. D. Bell, 4th Hussars, the Adjutant of the West Somerset Yeomanry, joined his Regiment overseas. He later made the Great Sacrifice. Captain T. C. King, 14th Hussars, was appointed in his place. He left in June, however, and the Adjutancy was thereafter held by officers of the Regiment. Captain R. C. Boyle was appointed Adjutant in succession to Captain King.

In September the Regiment was under canvas near Clacton-on-Sea, when it was asked to volunteer for service in the Mediterranean as a dismounted unit. Eager to see some fighting the West Somersets gladly assented, though their horses were given up with the very greatest regret.

Before we follow them on their great adventure, however, we must record briefly the formation and activities of the 2nd and 3rd Lines.



The 2/1st West Somerset Yeomanry Regiment was quickly raised at Taunton. It was intended for service overseas, and its personnel included only those who had accepted a general service obligation. A 3rd Line was then raised as a draft-finding unit for the 1st and 2nd Lines. But the 2nd Line never went out of the United Kingdom, and towards the end of 1916 the 2nd and 3rd

Lines were amalgamated. About the same time the 1/1st West Somerset Yeomanry, which the former had supplied with reinforcements, became the 12th Batt. Somerset L.I., and was reinforced by drafts from the 3rd (Special Reserve) Batt. of the latter Regiment. Its function as a draft-finding unit having ceased, the 2/1st West Somerset Yeomanry was formed into a Cyclist Regiment. It was stationed on the East Coast for a time, but for the last year of the war it formed part of the garrison in Ireland, being commanded finally by Lieut.-Colonel V. D. Stenhouse.

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At 3 p.m. on the 23rd September, 1915, the 1/1st West Somerset Yeomanry entrained at Thorpe-le-Soken for Liverpool, and, arriving there in the afternoon, they embarked on the Transport *Olympic*, the leviathan of the White Star Line. The great ship left the Mersey on the 25th, escorted by two t.b.d.'s. The Rock of Gibraltar was passed in the night, and it was not until they were well into the Mediterranean that anything of particular interest occurred. Then the survivors of a torpedoed Italian ship were picked up. A few hours later an enemy submarine was sighted. There was great bustle and excitement, the *Olympic* turned tail and ploughed through the sea with all the speed her mighty engines were able to produce, easily out-racing the under-sea craft.

Mudros was reached at last, and the *Olympic* entered the harbour, where ships of war of all sizes and kinds were gathered, and were dwarfed by her majestic size. The West Somersets did not land here, but after six days on board the *Olympic* they were transhipped to the *Osmanieh*. They were bound for Suvla Bay, and when passing Cape Helles they had a distant view of the British warships shelling Achi Baba, the high ridge which dominated Gallipoli.

Suvla was reached on the night of the 8th October. "It was just possible to make out the shape of the land, whose most prominent feature was a round hill. From innumerable points on that hill and right down to the water's edge glowed many lights : the effect seen from the ship's deck was that of a seaside town, and it was not difficult to imagine the commercial houses and wharfs by the water's edge, the residential quarter above the town on the hill-side." Darkness and an unusual situation lends power to men's fancy, and the fertile imagination which created this picture was

sadly disillusioned next day. "There revealed itself a low-lying shore, a round hill surmounting it—the hill of Lala Baba. Deep-burrowed, on the seaward side, by many a dug-out, it was from the honey-combed side of the hill and foreshore that last night's lights had come—guttering candle-ends."

The Regiment landed on the 9th and bivouacked in "Oxford Street," a position on the Karakol Dagh. During the next few weeks it experienced all the tortures Suvla had to offer. Flies swarmed everywhere and gave no peace, water had to be used sparingly ; the life the men led was a primitive one, for which modern man—softened by generations of comfort—is totally unfitted. The lack of good food, the scarcity of water, and the flies, all contributed to bring on early the scourge of hot countries—dysentery. The West Somersets soon made its acquaintance, and within a month nearly half the Regiment was sick with it. To add to their troubles, there was the everlasting knowledge that every inch of ground was in full view of the enemy, and every man who walked abroad was a possible target for the Turkish gunners.

The enemy heavily bombarded "Oxford Street" on the 17th October, but beyond one killed and a few wounded the Regiment suffered little. A section of howitzers near by received most casualties. A direct hit on one gun resulted in many killed and wounded, and though they were ringed about with bursting shells Major Farrant, the Medical Officer of the West Somersets, Lance-Corpl. Nelson (W.S.Y.), and Corpl. Phillips (2nd S.W. Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance) dashed through to aid the wounded. It is a great thing to be able to save life and to give comfort to the suffering ; it is superb to be able to do so when at any second a shell might blow one to fragments. Major Farrant was afterwards awarded the D.S.O., Lance-Corpl. Nelson received the Military Medal, while Corpl. Phillip's only reward was the knowledge that he had carried out his duty when death seemed the only gain.

On the night of the 3rd-4th November the Regiment took over a sector of front-line trenches for the first time. After an uneventful period of eight days it was relieved by the 5th Batt. Sherwood Foresters. The next trenches it occupied were in the "White House" sector, and, though deeper, were far less pleasant. The dead lay about in all directions, and though the West Somersets buried all they could, at the end of five days there were still many left.

The Regiment was relieved on the 24th and took over some shallow support trenches. They were scarcely above sea level, and even in dry weather were always damp. On the 26th rain began to fall. It continued for twenty-four hours, the water-courses began to fill, and their contents came rushing down the hills into the British trenches. Dug-outs collapsed and the sides of the trenches fell in, burying men as they fell. "D" Company lost practically the whole of its equipment, rifles and blankets. But worse was to follow. When the rain ceased a hard frost set in, and the men's soaked garments hardened on them as the cold increased. Then, to crown it all, an icy wind blew down upon them from the North-East, freezing the blood in their veins. During three days the Regiment lost in killed, wounded and frost-bitten, 3 officers and 78 other ranks. As the days passed other men broke down with trench feet—that horrible deadening of the flesh which often results in the loss of the toes and sometimes half the feet—and between 2nd and 4th of December not less than 183 other ranks were admitted to hospital. When it was all over some staff officer, possessed of a grim humour, issued "Instructions to be observed in the prevention of trench feet."

The Regiment did not stay at Suvla long, for on the 17th of December orders were received for the evacuation of the position. Suvla is the great tragedy of the war. If the attack had been pushed on the 6th and 7th August when the landing was made, the Karakol Dagh, Hill W and the Anafarta positions could have been taken, British guns would have commanded the enemy's communications with the Gallipoli peninsula; and made his position there very untenable. The Turks were at the outset inferior in numbers and ill-supported with artillery. When a series of determined attacks would have swept them away, they were permitted to hold on to key positions until reinforcements arrived, and a chance of a great coup was gone.

The evacuation of Suvla and Anzac was completed on the 19th of December, but the West Somersets left on the 18th. They were conveyed by lighter to the *Snaefell*, which took them across to the Isle of Imbros. There the attenuated Regiment went into camp, thankful to have escaped so easily from a very unpleasant situation. Out of 25 officers and 477 other ranks who landed on the 9th October, only 10 officers and 148 other ranks remained. These figures tell a story of their own.

On Christmas Eve the Regiment was on the move once more. Marching to Kephalos Harbour, it embarked on the *Barry*, a Bristol Channel steamer, which conveyed it and the Devon Yeomanry to Mudros. Arriving early in the morning of Christmas Day they were, some hours later, transhipped to a cattle boat, the *Novian*. At 4.30 a.m. on the 28th December the *Novian* weighed anchor, bound for Egypt.

Alexandria was reached on the 30th, and the Regiment disembarked next day. A four miles' train journey brought the West Somersets to Sidi Bishr Camp, where they were destined to rest for upwards of two months. Here the men recuperated their health, reinforcements were received, new clothing issued and the old cleaned, and the Regiment was able once more to assume the smart appearance for which it was noted. While at Sidi Bishr the 2nd Dismounted Brigade was formed out of the 2nd South-Western Mounted Brigade and the Highland Mounted Brigade. This was an ominous sign to those who hoped that one day they would again be mounted.

A move to Minia on the 4th March, 1916, brought them into the operations against the Senussi, the Puritans of the Mohammedan Faith. Acting under Turkish influence, the Senussi had invaded Egypt, but by this time their activity had been curtailed by defeats they had sustained at the Wady Shaifa, at Gebel Medwa and the Wady Majid. On the 25th February, 1916, they had attacked the British at Agagia, but were repulsed, and Gaafer Pasha, their Turkish Commander, was captured. In spite of this, however, they still held out in the many oases in the desert.

On the 21st April the West Somersets moved further South to Qara. This place was on the desert railway, which ended at the Kharga Oasis. To the latter place the Regiment moved on the 15th June, dropping *en route* "D" Squadron for detachment duty at Meheriq. In August the Regiment moved out to the railhead. The object was to extend the railway across the desert to the Dakhla Oasis, eighty miles distant, which was occupied by the Senussi.

From here the Regiment provided posts along the Gubbari Road to protect the railway material and stores piled in the path of the creeping railway. Life on these posts was very inert; there was little or nothing to do; water was as scarce as at Suyla, and had to be used even more sparingly, not a scrap of vegetation anywhere, and, as Kinglake says, "Still there was the same, and the same, and

the same—the same circle of flaming sky—the same circle of sand still glaring with light and fire. Over all the heaven above, over all the earth beneath, there was no visible power to balk the fierce will of the sun.”\* In the heat of the day the sun-baked desert breathed its hot vapour upon all living things, and they laboured in their breathing.

The West Somersets never reached Dakhla. In October a light-car patrol made a raid on the place. The Senussi became alarmed, and dashed off to their strongholds in the Northern part of the Libyan Desert. A large force in the Kharga Oasis was therefore no longer necessary, and on the 2nd December the Regiment entrained for Moascar Camp, Ismailia.

At this place the Yeomanry were changed definitely into Infantry. The 2nd Dismounted Brigade became the 229th Infantry Brigade, and the West Somerset Yeomanry were given the title of 12th (West Somerset Yeomanry) Batt. Somerset L.I. The other units of the Brigade were organised as follows :—

The Royal 1st Devon Yeomanry and Royal North Devon Yeomanry were amalgamated to form the 16th (Devon Yeomenry) Batt. Devon Regiment.

The Ayrshire and Lanarkshire Yeomanry Regiments were also merged into one to form the 14th (A. and L. Yeo.) Batt. Royal Scots Fusiliers.

While the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry, the remaining Regiment in the Highland Mounted Brigade, which had been amalgamated with the 2nd S.W. Mounted Brigade at Sidi Bisdr, became the 12th (F. and F. Yeomanry) Batt. Royal Highlanders.

The reorganisation came into effect on the 4th January, 1917, and about the same time the 74th (Yeomanry) Division was formed. To this Division the 229th Brigade belonged, with the 230th and 231st Brigades. For the next few weeks the West Somersets were busy learning infantry drill and tactics at El Ferdan on the Suez Canal, having marched there on the 7th January.

Early in March they moved on to Kantara, and there entrained for El Arish, the headquarters of the 74th Division. On the 21st the West Somersets commenced their march towards Palestine, bivouacing in turn at El Burj, Shiekh Zowaid and Rafa. They crossed the Sinai-Palestine frontier on the 29th, and, marching in

\* Kinglake's *Eothen*.

the vicious glare of the midday sun, they took over an ~~outpost~~ line at Khan Yunis in the evening.

The 74th Division was in general reserve when the Second Battle of Gaza opened on the 17th April. For two days the British hammered on the Turkish defences, but without success. On the 19th the 229th Brigade moved up in support. That night, however, the battle ceased, and the exhausted British forces fell back, having suffered not less than 7,000 casualties. "A," "B," and "C" Companies of the West Somersets took over positions on the Mansura Ridge, while "D" provided picquets at the head of "Happy Valley."

Next day the Battalion moved out of the Mansura Ridge, and marched by easy stages to Mendur, a position on the right, where the line more or less was in the air. Here, for some time, they were engaged in digging trenches.

After the burning heat of the Libyan Desert, Palestine was a comparatively cool place, but in other respects it was just as unpleasant. There was the everlasting scarcity of water, and through that or the heat, or both, the men's blood became poor. The smallest scratch became a sore, and, if not attended to quickly, became septic. Bandages came into frequent use, and at times the Battalion looked like a Battalion of wounded.

In June they once more took over trenches, this time in the Abbass Apex sector. The Turkish lines were two miles away, and over this wide "No Man's Land" the West Somersets were continually patrolling. The Turks, of course, did the same. Collisions were not frequent, but on the 7th June a patrol of "C" Company, commanded by Lieutenant R. Leversha, found itself cut off by an enemy patrol nearly four times as big. Fired on from a range of only twenty yards, the West Somersets dropped to cover. While they crouched in a fold in the ground, the enemy worked round them. Capture seemed inevitable, but the men of West Somerset were not disposed to surrender without a fight. They sprang up suddenly and charged. The Turks were surprised, and the gallantry of the Yeomen met with the success it deserved; they broke through, killing one of the enemy and wounding two others. What was more wonderful still, they reached their own trenches without one man being killed or wounded. The affair formed the subject of a Special Order by the General Officer Commanding 74th Division: Lieutenant Leversha was awarded the Military

Cross, and Pte. W. J. Adams, who used his bayonet with great success, received the Military Medal.

On October 17th Lieut.-Colonel F. N. Q. Shuldham became ill, and was admitted into hospital. The command of the Battalion was taken over by Major G. S. Poole. Colonel Shuldham's great regret, shared by the whole Battalion, was that he was thus unable to lead the unit, which he had trained and fostered so long, to win its spurs in active conflict with the enemy.

A week later the Battalion became engaged in the operations which resulted in the capture of Beersheba. On the 25th October it marched from Gaz el Taire to Abbu Sitta, and next evening moved on and crossed the Wadi Ghuzzee at Gamli. Marching on next day El Buggar was reached and occupied without opposition. On the night of the 30th-31st the 229th Brigade held the passage of the Wadi Saba, while the rest of the Division crossed over. When this was accomplished the Brigade formed the reserve to the 60th and 74th Divisions in their attack on Beersheba.

From their place in reserve the West Somersets had a clear view of the British marching on the place which Abraham called Beer-Sheba, the place where he and Abimelech swore a covenant of peace and goodwill. They watched the British shells bursting on Hill 1,070, saw the great clouds of dust which they sent up, and saw, too, the khaki waves rush up the hill and into and over the Turkish trenches. That night, in the mellow light of a full moon, mounted troops charged through Beersheba and the place was captured.

On the 1st November the Battalion marched N.W. of Beersheba and took over an outpost line at Muweileh. On the 3rd it was detached from the Brigade to support the 53rd Division during its advance on Khuweilfeh. By the 6th, however, the Battalion had rejoined its Brigade and found itself engaged in the Battle of Sheria. The West Somerset and Fife and Forfar Yeomanry Battalions were to lead the attack. At 5 p.m. on the 6th they began. There had been no time for reconnoitring the enemy's position, those in the forefront of the battle only knew that straight ahead there were Turks to kill and trenches to take. The ground they advanced over was quite open, barren of the slightest cover. There could be no delay in the advance over such country, and the West Somersets pressed on by a series of sprints. Men fell at every stage, shells burst among them and shattered them, and the prospect that they too might fall impelled the survivors to greater speed. They

jumped into the Turkish trenches, a horde of panting men, eager to kill and get the business finished.

By 7.15 a.m. the Cactus Garden Ridge was taken, and the Battalion halted for a while. The enemy's left was being rolled up, and he began to evacuate his positions around Sheria. The West Somersets advanced once more, and by 4.30 that afternoon had carried their last objective, the Beersheba-Sheria railway line. But great though the success was, great also was the cost. Captain A. T. L. Richardson, Sec.-Lieut. Chadwick, and 41 other ranks were killed, while Captain A. H. Wheeler, Captain Thomas R.A.M.C. [attached 12th (W.S.Y.) Battalion], Sec.-Lieuts. Gallop and Ryall, and 193 other ranks were wounded. The Battalion's spoils included 63 prisoners, a battery of field artillery, eight machine guns with ammunition, trench stores and equipment.

Next day the Turks evacuated Gaza.

For two days the Battalion remained on the ground it had gained, and then marched into Sheria. Here it was engaged for a week in clearing the town of the vast accumulation of filth left by the Turks. Here, too, the West Somersets buried their many dead comrades.

On the 16th the Battalion rejoined the Brigade at Shellal, and marched to "St. James' Park," South of Gaza. A few days later it began a five days' march northwards, and from the 25th to 30th December covered not less than 59 miles.

From the 1st to the 3rd of December the West Somersets were attached to the 231st Brigade operating around Bethhoron the Upper. This place was captured by the Devons on the 3rd, and later in the day the 12th Battalion rejoined the Brigade in reserve. From this time onwards it was engaged in the fighting in the hills which "stand about Jerusalem," to the North of the Holy City. And throughout the time rain poured down, steadily and persistently, turning the wadies into lanes of mud, through which the men struggled with many maledictions. The hills were enveloped in a thick, damp mist, and the atmosphere changed to icy coldness.

The West Somersets were in support to the Ayr and Lanark Yeomanry Battalion on the 8th, and, a gap appearing in the advance line, "C" Company was sent forward to fill it. The Turkish trenches were occupied, but a further advance was impossible owing to the tenacity with which the enemy held on to his positions. On the 9th the West Somersets expected to advance once more,

but when morning broke, and the mists cleared, they found the enemy had disappeared. He had fallen back with the vast army of Turkish troops, horses, wagons, and refugees that had streamed out of Jerusalem, for on this day the City of the Holy Sepulchre was surrendered to the 60th Division.

The Brigade moved back to Beit Iksa on the 10th December. This place was only four miles from Jerusalem, and many officers and men seized the opportunity to visit the Holy City. Few visits could be paid by the West Somersets, however, for soon after arriving at Beit Iksa they were detached to El Kubeibeh, where they were busy making roads. And nearly all the time they were there it rained without ceasing.

The Turks were expected to make a determined counter-attack to regain Jerusalem, and on the night of the 24th the West Somersets marched, in pitch darkness and a terrific downpour, to the Wadi Selman. Arriving there on Christmas morning they found they had to stay many hours without food of any kind ; the transport had broken down on account of the deep and treacherous mud.

On the might of the 26th-27th the enemy launched his expected counter-attack. It failed, and our troops retaliated without delay. The front assigned to the 12th Battalion was a steep hill, 600 feet high, rising sheer from the Wadi bed and crowned with the mosque of Sheikh Abu es Zeitun. In his War History of the West Somerset Yeomanry, Captain R. C. Boyle, M.C., compares it with the cliffs of the Cheddar Gorge, and from this description we can imagine the formidable task the West Somersets were set.

They began their advance up the hill at 8 a.m., with the Ayr and Lanarks on the right. It was a stiff climb, and the men were heavily burdened with their accoutrements, ammunition and Lewis guns. They were met with furious rifle fire from above, and were enfiladed from the right. Shrapnel burst over them, but on account of the steepness of the hill it had little effect. Up they went, 300 feet were soon covered. Still up and up, climbing, crawling and scrambling over terraces and rocks. Four hundred feet—a pause. They clung like ants to earth and rock. On once more, dodging from rock to rock. Five hundred feet up they halted to rest. Then came the last swift scramble, on to and over the Turkish sangars. Some men outraced the others, and of these Corporals W. Jones, C. Cleal and F. Couch jumped into different portions of the enemy position and fought single-handed until the remainder of the

Battalion came up. Ptes. C. Bethel and Dawden worked their Lewis gun until all their ammunition was expended ; then they seized stones and threw them at the enemy. By 9.15 a.m. the position and all the living Turks in it had been captured.

At 12 noon two companies of the Battalion advanced once more, and the second position was taken with comparative ease. At 6 p.m. the West Somersets moved forward in support of the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry Battalion, who captured, in the dark and after a hand-to-hand struggle, the third objective, a position running North and South across the Zeitun Ridge.

Next day the West Somersets were to the fore once more, and at 3 p.m. advanced on Hill 35. Well supported by artillery and machine guns, they made rapid progress and in half-an-hour the enemy's position was in their hands.

During the 27th and 28th the 12th Battalion suffered singularly few casualties—only thirteen other ranks were killed, and Sec.-Lieuts. Cross, D.C.M., and Haddon, and 79 other ranks were wounded.

Throughout these operations the Battalion was commanded by Major C. R. Hayward. They proved to be the last actions in which the West Somersets were destined to be engaged in Palestine. On the 1st January, 1918, the 229th Brigade went back to rest, and the West Somersets went into camp at Yalo. Here they stayed for more than two months.

Moving northwards on March 5th they were employed for eight days repairing the Jerusalem-Nablus Road, which the Turks had mined in several places. A portion of the line of the Wadi Kola, near Kefr Malik, was then taken over, and on the 27th, "D" Company, commanded by Captain Wheeler, carried out a raid in the face of heavy machine-gun fire. Most of the enemy retreated, however, and those who did not were captured. The Company suffered to the extent of six rank and file wounded.

About this time things had taken a serious turn in France. Before the full fury of the German offensive the British line had fallen back. Our resources in men were strained to the utmost, and it became necessary to withdraw troops from other fronts in order to replace the vast numbers killed and wounded in the endeavour to stem the German advance.

The 52nd and 74th Divisions were chosen for service in France. On the 9th April the West Somersets were relieved, and proceeded

to Ludd, entraining there for Kantara. Arriving on the 15th, they stayed at Kantara a fortnight, and here they prepared for and discussed their fourth campaign. The men realised they were about to enter upon a venture more terrible than anything they had experienced at Suvla, in the desert, or in Palestine. It was a new school of courage, where the teacher was a ruthless enemy, fortified and made more formidable by the concentration of all his scientists and artificers on the one subject—to kill, kill, and yet again to kill.

The 12th Battalion left Kantara for Alexandria on the 19th April. Arriving there, it embarked 37 officers and 964 other ranks on the *Leasowe Castle*, bound for France and Belgium, the Devil's Playground.

To men who for two years had lived where Nature had presented herself in the sparse vegetation of Suvla, the burnt-up shrubs of the desert oasis, and the barren hills of Judea, France in one respect came as a paradise. Somerset men do not usually give voice to their feelings, but verdant France impressed them deep down in their hearts ; the trees were vivid in their greenness ; a green field appeared to them as a thing of beauty, never before realised.

The West Somersets arrived at Marseilles on the 7th May. A three-day's train journey brought them to Noyelles, and from there they marched to billets in Forest Montiers. June and July were spent in the reserve area at Busnes and St. Venant, training for the new forms of fighting for which they were destined. On July 4th the Transport was shelled by long-range guns, and four other ranks were killed and five wounded.

The Battalion took over some front line trenches on the 23rd July, relieving the Suffolk Yeomanry in the Robecq area. Eight days of trench warfare followed, and there were casualties almost every day. Captain Rodd and Lieutenant Haddon were wounded, the former being comforted in the belief that he had brought down a low-flying Gotha with his revolver.

In the afternoon of the 8th August the Battalion again moved into the front line. At 6 p.m. "B" and "D" Companies left their breast-works to gain an objective three-quarters of a mile distant.

The village of Calonne and the line of a small tributary of the Clarence River were taken with comparatively little loss. There was practically no shelling owing to the enemy being occupied with the great Allied counter-offensive, which had opened further South. The chief opposition came from enemy machine gunners and

snipers. "D" Company's two officers and the Company-Sergeant-Major became casualties, but Sergeant E. J. Warfield took command and brought the Company through successfully. He was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Next day the Battalion sent out patrols in search of the enemy, who had retired. He was discovered in and about the village of Reginer. On the 10th the West Somersets were relieved by the 15th Suffolks and withdrew to Brigade reserve.

On the 27th August they were relieved in the front line by the 11th Battalion Somerset L.I., another of our Territorial Battalions.

Under the Command of Major (afterwards Lieut.-Colonel) C. R. Hayward, D.S.O., the 12th Battalion now proceeded to the Somme Area. On the night of the 1st-2nd September, it relieved the 41st and 42nd Battalions Australian Imperial Force in the front line to the East of the Peronne-Bapaume Road.

At 5.30 a.m. next day the Battalion attacked. Three objectives were assigned to the Battalion, which was to advance between the villages of Haut Allaines and Moislans. These places, strongly fortified by machine guns, were left to the Australians and Devon Yeomanry Battalion respectively. The first objective was across the R. Tortille and the Canal du Nord, distant nearly 2,000 yards. It was taken at 8 a.m. in spite of murderous shell-fire and a hail of machine-gun bullets. The enemy still held out in the two villages, and the West Somersets found themselves enfiladed on both flanks. In spite of this, however, they were ordered on to the second objective, and as they advanced they were fired on from behind by the Germans in Haut Allaines. The continued progress of the 12th Battalion alarmed the enemy, who was in danger of being squeezed out of Haut Allaines. The Battalion had no sooner reached its second goal when it was strongly counter-attacked from the direction of Moislans. The men of West Somerset fought stubbornly, but were forced back to the first objective, and here, in spite of many attacks, they held their ground.

In the meantime, two companies of the Battalion, working in conjunction with the Australians, succeeded in taking Haut Allaines. With this secured, the Battalion advanced once more. For a second time that day they reached the high water mark of their advance; and for a second time they were forced back, fighting every inch of the way. Machine gunners pushed forward and sacrificed themselves in their endeavours to mow down the enemy masses; men

clung to their shell holes and were shattered with bombs and high explosives. And when night fell, because the Germans still held out in Moislans, the British line was withdrawn to some old trenches, scarcely 500 yards in front of the "jumping-off line," from which the attack commenced in the morning.

The day's toll was a heavy one. Captains T. F. Wallis, D. J. B. Taylor, Sec.-Lieutenants T. G. F. Wills, J. B. Craike, J. H. Jenkins, and 41 other ranks were killed; Captain W. A. Keen died of wounds; Lieutenants C. G. Thomason, J. W. Hartnell, Sec.-Lieutenants W. E. H. Firman, J. P. O. Vallow, A. W. Piper, and 161 other ranks were wounded, and 14 other ranks were "missing."

On the night of the 4th the Battalion was relieved and moved back in reserve. About the same time the enemy began a retirement, and on the 6th the West Somersets moved up to Aizecourt. Next day they moved on to Longavenes, and on the 9th once more took over a portion of the front line.

Two days later the tragedy of "D" Company occurred. The Company had been attached to the Fife and Forfar Battalion on the 8th of September. At 2 p.m. on the 11th, the 229th Brigade was ordered to prepare to advance. "Zero hour" was fixed at 6 a.m.; but before this hour "D" Company, 100 strong, under the command of Captain F. F. Edbrook, M.C., was ordered to clear Esclainvillers Wood. The Wood was strongly held by German machine gunners, and their storm of death almost withered away Captain Edbrook's small command. "D" Company, when it reached its objective, consisted of Captain Edbrook and 24 men. They never returned. The Germans counter-attacked, and, surrounding the remnant of "D" Company, captured every man.

It was found afterwards that the attack had been postponed for three hours, but the order never reached the units concerned.

The Battalion was relieved that night, and went into bivouacs near Templeux le Fosse.

The Battalion moved forward during a terrific thunderstorm to the railway cutting and quarries near Villers Faucon on the night of the 16th-17th September. The men, drenched through, had scarcely got into their positions when the Germans began a bombardment with high explosive and gas shells. The gas was the terrible "mustard" gas, which blistered every particle of exposed flesh, and even burnt through the clothing. In spite of every precaution being taken, the Battalion suffered not less than 100

casualties from this alone. "A" Company was reduced to 29 men. And this was on the eve of an attack.

At 5 a.m., on the 18th September, the great attack by the 4th Army began. The West Somersets were in support to the Sussex Yeomanry Battalion until the first objective was reached. They then passed through the Sussex men and advanced in the wake of a creeping barrage. There is no greater test of courage than this, to follow closely one's own barrage, knowing that a shell aimed a little too short, and even pieces blown back by those that burst correctly, might cause shocking casualties among those who follow. And if the barrage is not followed closely the enemy machine gunners have time to dash out of their deeply sunk dug-outs and mow down the oncoming waves. To keep close to the barrage was the lesser of two evils.

The West Somersets took all their objectives at a cost of four other ranks killed and Captain Spittall and 46 other ranks wounded. They took prisoners four officers and 74 other ranks. They consolidated the position they had won, and on the 19th were relieved to go back into bivouacs near Roisel.

The following day, however, the 229th Brigade was ordered to support the 230th and 231st Brigades. The West Somerset Yeomanry Battalion at this time consisted of four officers and 130 other ranks. They remained in support until the 24th September, when they were relieved by the 106th Battalion of the United States Army. During these days in support Lieutenant Thomson was killed.

Two days later the Battalion entrained at Tincourt for Villers Bretonneux, marching from there to billets in Corbie. Here Lieut.-Colonel G. S. Poole, D.S.O., returned from leave in England, and took over command from Major C. R. Hayward, D.S.O. About this time the enemy began a general retirement along almost the whole of the British front.

On the 10th October the West Somersets went into the line at Petit Haubourdin, facing the great city of Lille. The enemy evacuated this place on the 17th, and, skirting the southern portion of it, the 229th Brigade pressed on after the rapidly retiring enemy. The village of Marquain was cleared of Germans on the 19th, and Orcq was captured on the day following. On the 22nd the Battalion suffered its last casualties, two men being killed and twenty wounded

in an attempt to capture a sunken road East of Orcq. It was relieved that night, and for upwards of a fortnight was in reserve.

The West Somersets were marching to Escalette on the 11th November, when the news came that the Armistice would come into force at 11 a.m. that day. When that great moment came these men were not afflicted with the mob madness which animated the people at home. There was no capering about, no waving of flags and no shouting—the great moment passed in a profound silence in which it seemed possible to hear a great sigh of relief and thankfulness go up from the millions of men whose only mission in life for more than four long years had been to kill and destroy.

The Battalion marched on to the Belgian village of Ollignies, and was invited by the villagers to take part in a peace celebration. As a token of gratitude, and a souvenir of that day, the Burgomaster presented a Belgian flag to the Battalion. To-day that flag rests in St. Mary's Church, Taunton.

The West Somersets now began to disperse, but the wheels of demobilisation moved slowly, so that it was not until the middle of June that the Battalion was reduced to cadre strength, and returned to England under the command of Major T. A. Rattray, M.C. The cadre reached Taunton on the 21st June, and received a great welcome from the townspeople as it marched through the streets behind the cadre of the 1st Battalion Somerset L.I.

The demobilisation of the cadre marks the end of the West Somerset Yeomanry, for it was not among the favoured few Yeomanry Regiments which the Army Council decided to revive. Thus our oldest Territorial Regiment would pass into oblivion were it not that its great achievements are commemorated by the War Memorial Window in St. Mary's Church, Taunton, and the graves of its many dead at Suvla, in Egypt, Palestine, France, and Belgium.

## CHAPTER IV.

## SOMERSET ROYAL HORSE ARTILLERY.\*

THE Headquarters of the Battery were at Taunton, and acting on a telegram to "Mobilize" received by the Somerset Territorial Association, Captain (now Lieut.-Col.) C. D. G. Lyon, the Adjutant, sent out telegrams and notices to officers and men of the Battery. This task was completed before the Battery received its telegram to mobilize at 8 p.m. Mobilization was carried out at sub-section headquarters at Taunton, Shepton Mallet, Glastonbury, and Wells.

On the 6th August the Ammunition Column moved from Portishead to Taunton, and five days later, under the command of Major F. Aikenhead, the Battery and Ammunition Column entrained for Winchester. There they joined the 2nd South-Western Mounted Brigade, and proceeded with it to Colchester on the 15th. The Somerset R.H.A. were first accommodated in billets near Wivenhoe, and here on the 28th volunteers for service overseas were called for. Of the Battery 85 per cent. responded, but only 61 per cent. of the Ammunition Column accepted overseas obligation. They moved to Great Bentley on the 4th September, and next day one officer and one Permanent Staff Sergeant were sent to Taunton to recruit 55 men, the number required to replace the men who had not volunteered. They returned three days later with the number required.

In October Lieutenant W. H. Bailey left the Battery to raise the 2/1st Somerset R.H.A. at Taunton. This Second Line unit was for a time stationed on the East Coast. It went to France in 1917, but was disbanded before it saw any fighting, and its personnel was distributed among the batteries of the 223rd (Home Counties) Brigade R.F.A.

\* This chapter is compiled from notes and a diary loaned by Major H. S. White. *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine*, by Major Powles, and a short account of the Battery, written by Major W. H. Bailey, were also consulted.

The 1/1st Somerset R.H.A. remained at Great Bentley when the 2nd South-Western Mounted Brigade proceeded to Suvla. Moving to Colchester in November, the Battery experienced many alarms in connection with Zeppelin and Aeroplane raids.

Orders to proceed to Egypt were received on 1st January, 1916, but it was not until 14th February that the Battery and Ammunition Column left Colchester for Devonport. Next day 70 rank and file, with Captain M. Clowes, and all the horses and vehicles, were embarked on the Transport *Kabinga*. On the 18th the remainder of the Battery embarked on the *Manitou*, which sailed that day at 5 p.m.

The *Kabinga* and *Manitou* arrived at Alexandria on the 29th February, and on the day following the Somerset Artillerymen disembarked and were accommodated in Zarahieh Camp. On the 22nd they left by train for Serapeum, where they joined the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division ("Anzac Mounted Division").

This Division was commanded by Major-General H. G. Chauvel, and consisted of :—

1st Australian Light Horse Brigade.

2nd            "            "            "

3rd            "            "            "

New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade.

Somerset, Leicestershire, Ayrshire, and Inverness-shire

Batteries of R.H.A.

During the greater part of its service in Sinai and Palestine the Somerset Battery was attached to the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade, under the command of Brig.-General W. Meldrum.

At this time the Sinai Peninsula was occupied by the Turks, and the troops at Serapeum formed part of the force which was engaged in protecting the Canal. On the 10th April information was received that the enemy had driven in the outposts at the wells of Katia and Oghratina, and the Canal was threatened. The Anzac Mounted Division was hurried up to Kantara and the Somerset Gunners were sent to Salhieh.

It was here that they suffered their first loss. Gunner A. Green died of appendicitis on the 15th April. He was buried on a mound overlooking the Salhieh-Kantara railway, a silent watcher of the many thousands that afterwards passed along that iron road towards the East where Palestine lay.

During May the Khamsin season was at its height. The Khamsin is a South wind, suffocating in its intense heat. The temperature rises to 115 or more in the shade, and overpowers men and beasts. They groan beneath its flaming caress, the skin burns, the lips become dry and shrivelled, and the eyeballs ache and feel as though an immense weight were pressing them against the brain.

Two horses died of exhaustion when the Battery marched to Kantara on the 10th May. It moved out to Hill 70 in the desert on the 13th, but had to return to Kantara two days later owing to lack of water. At the same time Major F. Aikenhead was admitted to hospital with heat-stroke, and Captain M. Clowes took command of the Battery.

The Somerset R.H.A. were again at Hill 70 when the Turks attacked Romani on the 4th August. They marched without a halt from 7.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m., when they came into action against the enemy on Mount Royston. In this their first action the Somerset Gunners gained the reputation they maintained throughout the war, a reputation for rapid and accurate shooting. It was mainly owing to this valuable support that the New Zealanders and Yeomanry were able to capture the mount, which prevented the Turks from cutting the British lines of communication. The enemy's attempt to reach the Canal was frustrated, and the Battery came out of action at 6.30 p.m. It bivouacked that night near the ruins of Pelusium, the place where Cambyses, the Persian, fought and conquered the Egyptians.

Next day the Battery went to Duedar, the intention being to make a rear attack on the enemy position at Hod el Ena. But the Turks had retired in the night, and later in the day the Battery received orders to push on to Katia. The road that led there was of sand, and passed over ridges of sand that shifted with every storm. Only half the battery could move as the horses of the other half were needed to help drag the guns and wagons through the soft, yielding sand. Katia was reached at 4.30 p.m., but the Battery was in reserve and did not fire. The Anzac Mounted Division made a magnificent charge across marshy ground, and when it got too soft to bear their horses the Australians and New Zealanders dismounted, and with fixed bayonets assailed the Turkish positions on foot. After capturing many prisoners they were withdrawn. The Somerset Gunners spent that night at Romani.

On the 6th the Battery, with the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade, marched off at 7 a.m. to make another attack on the enemy at Katia. After his severe losses of the previous day, however, he had retired, and, pushing on, the New Zealanders discovered him in position at Oghratina. There was no engagement that day, but when the Somerset Gunners were watering their horses at Umm Ugba, they came under heavy shell-fire from enemy howitzers. Three times the Battery moved, and three times the enemy found it, and it was not until a covered position was found that they escaped the enemy's shells. Fortunately, only two horses were killed. The night was spent at Rabah.

At sunrise on the 7th the Battery, accompanied the New Zealand Brigade on a reconnaissance in force towards Oghratina. The Gunners came into action at 7 a.m. S.E. of Umm Ugba, and fired all day. It was discovered about 3.30 p.m. by enemy aircraft, and though it was heavily shelled there was not a single casualty. When darkness fell the Battery retired to Rabah. Moving on again the next day before dawn the attacking force found the Turks had retired to Bir el Abd. In the afternoon the Somerset Battery reached Debabis, and for the first time for many days the men and horses enjoyed a few hours of real rest ; and, greatest comfort of all, water was found to be plentiful.

An attack on the enemy position at Bir el Abd was planned for the following day, and the advance began before dawn with the New Zealand Brigade in the centre. The attack failed, and the Australian Brigades on the flanks were forced back ; but the New Zealand Brigade, well supported by the Somerset and Leicester Batteries, was able to maintain its position in spite of three very determined counter-attacks. The Somerset Battery kept up a rapid fire from 7 a.m. to 6.30 p.m., and then retired to Oghratina.

For the next three days the Battery was at Debabis, and on the 13th moved out with the force which was to make another attack on Bir el Abd. But, as had happened so many times during the past few days, the enemy was found again to have retired. This time it was to El Arish, beyond the long arm of even the best mounted troops, until the railway could be extended and arrangements made for watering men and horses in the great desert.

From this time until December there were no engagements between our forces and the Turks, but during the whole of the time the Battery was ready to move at short notice. On the 13th

September two officers, 54 other ranks and 113 horses were loaned to the Ayrshire Battery for a reconnaissance in force ; and on the 15th November the Somerset Battery demonstrated the utility of a still gun platform invented by Lieutenant Blandy. This is not the only instance of the Somerset Gunners' ingenuity. While at Serapeum Staff-Sergeant Saddler J. Hillard designed a canvas shell-carrier to carry eight 18-inch shells, four each side of a horse or mule. It was adopted for use on all fronts.

Day by day, with the construction of the railway proceeding rapidly, the British Army crept across the Sinai Peninsula, until on the 20th December it was possible to make a final dash on El Arish. Marching by night the town was surrounded, and next day was occupied without much opposition. The enemy had, however, withdrawn his main force to El Magdhaba. This seriously menaced the British flank, and it was decided to make an immediate attack on him in this stronghold.

Accordingly, at 8 p.m. on the 22nd, the Anzac Mounted Division set out. Magdhaba, more than 30 miles away, was reached about 4 a.m. next day. Though taken completely by surprise, the Turks stubbornly defended the town, and the Somerset R.H.A. were in action throughout the day. By dusk the enemy had had enough and retreated. 1,282 prisoners, with 43 officers, a battery of mountain guns, and a vast amount of ammunition and stores were collected together, and the march back to El Arish began. For nearly 30 hours the men had been fighting and marching, and it was a thoroughly exhausted column which stumbled its way across the desert. Men fell asleep as they rode, and their horses strayed from the column until a less sleepy trooper brought them back. Those in rear were blinded by the dust the Division raised ; sand got into the mouths of men and beasts, and tongues and throats became parched. The men were exhausted to the very limit of their endurance ; their vision played them tricks and they saw strange things ; tall buildings, lighted up and festive looking, which they knew at home ; animals, familiar and unfamiliar, seemed to cross their path, and the old folks at home made fleeting appearances before their eyes. One officer of the Somerset Battery continually saw a brick wall appear just in front of him, through which his horse seemed to thrust its head. The men before him often appeared to be mounted on camels, whereas he knew they were riding horses. Looking back at his men he once saw his gun-team upside-down,

but on riding back it was found to be the right way up, and moving on as rapidly as tired horses could drag it. Visions of these kinds were experienced by nearly every man, and it was not uncommon for them to see green dragons and golden snakes rise out of the sand at their horses' feet. Even the Divisional General was affected, and galloped off in the darkness—fox-hunting !\*

El Arish was reached at 3 a.m. on the 24th, and the Somerset Battery had covered upwards of 70 miles in 31 hours, during nine of which they were in action and firing continuously.

Next day was Christmas Day, and the Somerset Gunners feasted on “bully beef,” biscuits, and figs.

On the 8th January, at 3 p.m., the advance on Rafa began. Rafa was the last Turkish stronghold in Sinai, and is situated on the frontier of Palestine. The Battle of Rafa commenced at 6 a.m. on the 9th, and in order to give the dismounted New Zealanders effective support, the Somerset Gunners moved their guns into the open and served them there in spite of heavy shelling. The Battery was led into its first position round one of the boundary stones of Sinai and Palestine. The Somerset Artillerymen therefore claim to be the first Gunners to enter the Holy Land. Rafa fell at dusk, and its capture marked the end of the Sinai Campaign, the brunt of which had been borne by the Anzac Mounted Division.

During the whole of the Desert Campaign 14-horse teams were used for the four guns and four ammunition wagons, which comprised the firing Battery. These teams worked four abreast, with a pair harnessed to the inside horses of the leading four. The driver of this pair was responsible for the direction. The wheels of the guns and ammunition wagons were equipped with “pedrails,” blocks of wood about one foot square, chained to the wheels in order to provide a larger bearing surface on the soft sand. It was in this manner that the Battery galloped into position in the open at the Battle of Rafa.

Preparations for the invasion of Palestine were now made. On March the 26th the attack on Gaza commenced. The Somerset R.H.A. crossed the Wadi Ghuzzee that night, and went into action

\* These visions were thought at the time to be due to a white dust which got into throat and nostrils, and its poison affected the brain. We would have thought that the more plausible explanation would have been that the sub-conscious mind over-powered the tired conscious one and these hallucinations ensued.

to the North of the town. The Turks were completely surrounded, and it was only a question of hours before they capitulated. But there was another factor to contend with: water was extremely scarce, the horses had not a drain all day: the men were scarcely better off, and as night fell the investing troops were withdrawn to the Wadi Ghuzzee. Thus, for want of water, the first attack on Gaza failed.

The Somerset Battery returned to Belah. On the 4th April the Battery was filmed during a march to Khan Yunis. It was in reserve during the Second Battle of Gaza, and on the day following that disastrous affair it lost three men killed and two wounded. The Battery was with the Anzac Mounted Division when it raided the Turkish railway at Asluj. Fifteen miles of rail was destroyed, and several bridges were blown up, including a long eighteen arch one at Asluj.

The Somerset R.H.A. were for the most part on the right flank of the British Army, where the fighting, when there was any, was carried out in the open. On 8th July there was a reconnaissance in force towards Beersheba. The Battery came into action near El Buggar, and enjoyed the rare experience of firing on troops which were directly observed. There was another movement towards Beersheba on the 23rd to verify a report that the Turks had evacuated the town. But they were found to be in full strength.

In August the Battery moved back to Marakeb, and carried out training. Marakeb was on the coast, and there the men and horses were refreshed by many a dip in the sea. On 8th September the Battery's 18-pounder guns were exchanged by 13-pounder quick-firers belonging to the 4th Battery, South African Artillery. The Ammunition Column lost its identity with the Battery on 11th October when, with other Columns, it formed a Brigade Ammunition Column.

The Battery was at Abasan on the 24th October when, at 5 a.m. that day, it set out for Esani to play its part in the capture of Beersheba. Leaving its bivouacs at the latter place on the 28th, it moved to Khalasa, and next day to Asluj. It left Asluj at 5 p.m. on the 30th and marched with the N.Z. Mounted Rifles Brigade to the North-East of Beersheba. At 8.30 a.m. next day the Battery came into action at 3,000 yards, and while the West Somerset Yeomanry watched the Infantry advance on the West of Beersheba, the Somerset Gunners were supporting the advance of the mounted

troops. At 11 a.m. they moved up and opened on the Tel el Saba at 1,000 yards. This Tel (mound) was held by numerous machine guns, which checked the advance. The Tel was captured at 3 p.m., and its capture made the fall of Beersheba inevitable. This happened as the day drew to its close.

The Battery was now engaged in the task of rolling up the enemy's left flank, and forcing him out of Gaza. Often the Gunners were at their guns all day, loading and firing until their arms ached and worked jerkily like worn-out machines. Taking up precarious positions they frequently had to leave hurriedly. Enemy aeroplanes swooped down upon them and dropped bombs; and in this way five men were wounded at Wadi Malik on 2nd November. Water was extremely scarce, and when the Battery was at Kohl el Ras, 7th to 9th November, the horses had to be taken eighteen miles away to be watered.

On the 14th the Somerset Battery supported the attack of the N.Z. Mounted Rifles Brigade at Ayun Kara. This was a strong natural position held by an enemy force far superior in numbers to the attacking troops. But, thanks to good gunnery and the all-conquering spirit of New Zealand's fighting men, it was captured after many hours' stubborn fighting. As a direct result of this victory, the Australian Mounted Division was next day able to capture Junction Station and the important towns of Ramleh and Ludd.

Major Clowes commanded the 18th Brigade R.H.A. from 16th to 22nd November, again from the 29th November to 28th December, 1917, and went on leave to England from 17th January to 4th April, 1918. During these periods the Battery was under the command of Captain H. S. White.

Jaffa surrendered to the New Zealanders on 16th November, 1917, and the Battery entered Sarona on the 18th, being the first English unit to reach the place. The New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade then took up a defensive line on the River Auja, but on the 24th was ordered to make a demonstration across the river. The villages of Sheik Muannis and Khurbet Hadrah were captured without opposition.

Next day, however, the Turks counter-attacked with overwhelming forces. The Somerset Gunners shelled their oncoming waves from a position only 1,000 yards South of Sheik Muannis, and remained in position long after the enemy had occupied the village.

Major Clowes and some of the Battery staff, who were observing in the village, had to swim the river under rifle fire. On this day Gunner C. A. Salut was killed. The Battery retired behind the village of Summeil later in the day.

The Somerset Battery remained around Jaffa up to the beginning of March. Long before this time Jerusalem had fallen, but the enemy still held the barren country between the Holy City and the River Jordan. The Anzac Mounted Division was ordered to drive him out of this district, and on the 17th March, 1918, the Somerset Gunners found themselves with the New Zealand Brigade at Bethlehem.

The march to Talat el Dumm on the 20th marked the first stage in the great raid on Amman, the Turks' stronghold in the land of Moab, to the East of the Jordan. The river was crossed on the 24th, and next day the Battery reached Shunit Nimrin. Here it was bombed by enemy aircraft on the 28th, but found shelter in a cave. Marching via Es Salt, along a road which had been reported unfit for wheeled traffic, it reached Amman at 8.30 a.m. on the 30th. With the exception of four small mountain guns, carried on pack animals, the Somerset Battery was the only one to reach Amman. Coming into action at 11 a.m., it fired continuously until midnight, when our troops began to retire, having accomplished their task of destroying the enemy's main line of communication in the East. In the rearguard action which followed the Battery supported the 2nd Australian Light Horse Brigade as far as Es Salt. The raid had been carried out among mountains. Day after day rain, sleet and hail fell unceasingly, and a biting cold wind lashed it into men's faces. The road, after the passing of so many troops, was a narrow track of mud, full of holes into which horses and guns fell continuously. To leave it was to find oneself in a bog or on a slippery slope on which it was impossible for horses or men to obtain foothold. The task which the Somerset Battery accomplished in reaching Amman seemed beyond the power of men and beasts.

From the freezing atmosphere of Moab's mountains the Battery went down to the Jordan Valley, the hottest place in all Palestine. It was employed here for many sweltering months in guarding the Ghoraniyeh Bridgehead and other strategic points along the River Jordan. They contributed their share to the defeat of the Turks when they attacked the Bridgehead on 11th April, 1918, firing not less than 1,046 rounds during the day. In this engagement Lieut.

S. M. Pollard was killed while acting as Forward Observation Officer.

During the operations which resulted in the final overthrow of the enemy the Battery formed part of Chaytor's Force, and was present at the engagements of Es Salt and Amman.

When the tide of war had spent itself, and peace came at last, the Somerset Gunners returned to Rafa. Here its strength was gradually reduced by the process of demobilization when the disturbances in Egypt broke out in 1919. While these were at their height, a portion of the Battery patrolled the Suez Canal. The trouble soon subsided, and the Somerset R.H.A., being reduced to cadre strength, returned to England and were welcomed home by the Mayor of Taunton and the townspeople.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE WESSEX DIVISIONAL ROYAL ENGINEERS.\*

**T**HE Wessex Divisional Royal Engineers were in camp at Sling Plantation, Bulford, in the beginning of August, 1914. They mustered twelve officers and 341 other ranks. Mobilization was carried out immediately, and the two Field Companies were sent to work on the Portsmouth defences.

Each Field Company was a unit in itself, and each subsequently had its second and third lines. In August, 1915, it was decided to form a third Field Company with a second and, later, a third line. Thus in the place of the two pre-war companies, Somerset raised not less than nine Field Companies. Six of these served overseas.

It would be difficult, under ordinary circumstances, to give a useful history of each company in the little space at our disposal, but our task is made easier by the fact that two Companies worked together in every case.

Towards the end of 1916 the Field Companies were renumbered as follows :—

1 /1st	Wessex Field Company	became	500th (Wessex) Field Company.
1 /2nd	"	"	501st "
1 /3rd	"	"	502nd "
2 /1st	"	"	503rd "
2 /2nd	"	"	504th "
2 /3rd	"	"	505th "
3 /1st	"	"	506th "
3 /2nd	"	"	507th "
3 /3rd	"	"	508th "

We shall use the former titles throughout this chapter.



While at Portsmouth the 1 /1st and 1 /2nd Wessex Field companies, under the command of Major R. B. Dutton and Major

\* This chapter is compiled from M.S. accounts and records of honours awarded, which are in the possession of the Somerset T.A. Association. Major C. L. Fox's *Narrative of the 502nd (Wessex) Field Company, Royal Engineers, 1915-1919*, and Major A. Stirling's, *The Territorial Divisions, 1914-1918*, have also been consulted.

P. G. Fry respectively, were attached to the 27th Division, a "New Army" Division which was concentrated in and around Winchester. They therefore ceased to be the Divisional Engineers of the Wessex Division, and did not accompany that Division to India in October, 1914. There was sterner work before them.

The two companies left England for France about 20th December. After a fortnight at St. Omer, the 27th Division took over part of the French line from Vierstraat to St. Eloi. During this time the Engineers lost many men while digging new trenches behind the line and wiring existing trenches at night in "No Man's Land." They took part in the First Battle of St. Eloi, when the Germans succeeded in capturing the village on 14th March, 1915; and when the British counter-attacked next day they helped to consolidate the village and trenches which were regained. While thus engaged they suffered many casualties.

The 27th Division moved into the Ypres Salient towards the end of March, and for three weeks had a comparatively quiet time. It was but the calm before the storm. On the 22nd April, 1915, the Second Battle of Ypres commenced, and the enemy broke through the Steenstraate-Langemarch sector, mainly because of the introduction of his new and deadly weapon—gas. Throughout this Battle the Sappers worked incessantly, constructing field defences, dug-outs, strong points, and support lines, and helped to make the new line to which the shattered 4th Division retired on the night of the 3rd-4th of May.

About the 15th May the 27th Division was relieved by the 2nd Cavalry Corps. The 1/1st Field Company remained with the latter formation for two weeks constructing strong points.

From the end of May to September, 1915, the two companies were in the Armentieres sector. In the latter month the 27th Division moved to the Somme Area, and there the 1/2nd Field Company was engaged almost entirely in mining, a particularly hazardous and delicate task when the enemy is doing the same in close proximity. The 1/1st Field Company did a great deal of work on the front line trenches at this time.

Towards the end of November, 1915, the Wessex Royal Engineers were chosen for the Salonika Force. But it was not until nearly the end of January, 1916, that they embarked at Marseilles and reached Salonika about the 27th. On this front the



When the Armistice was signed, and hostilities came to an end, they were in the vicinity of Sofia. Almost immediately after the Armistice the 27th Division was sent to the Caucuses to protect the oil-wells at Tiflis and Baku. The 1/2nd Field Company was at Tiflis, while half the 1/1st was at Baku, with a section to the North at Petrovsk and another at Krasnovodsk in Turkistan. The companies were here employed in arranging the water supply and billets for the troops.

Towards the end of 1919 they were reduced to cadre strength, and returned to England about November, 1919.

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The 2/1st Field Company and the 2/2nd Field Company, commanded respectively by Majors C. Bamford and R. F. Lockett, were raised at Bath and Weston-super-Mare respectively. During the greater part of 1915 they were stationed at Christchurch, Hants. They became the Divisional Engineers of the 58th (London) Division in February, 1916, and joined that Division in the Ipswich area. They were employed there for some time on the many defensive works on the East Coast, and moved later to Salisbury Plain.

The 58th Division crossed to France in January, 1917. The Sappers had their baptism of fire while working on the trenches to the South of Arras, where the Division took over a portion of the line for the first time. It moved South to the River Ancre in March, when the enemy began his retreat to the Hindenburg Line. In this great advance of the British Army the Engineers were to the fore, being engaged in the extremely dangerous task of discovering and rendering innocuous land mines and "booby" traps—bombs placed inside German helmets and other souvenirs which explode and blow men to pieces as they snatch up the coveted trophies.

During May and June the 58th Division was in the fierce battles around Bullecourt. On the 7th May the 7th Division gained a footing in the village, and, exploiting its success day by day, in the face of most obstinate resistance, the 58th and 62nd Divisions completed the capture of Bullecourt on the 17th. While this was going on the Wessex Field Companies worked day and night giving expert assistance to the men in the trenches, wiring, constructing, and consolidating the ground they gained. Often working under rifle

and machine-gun fire, and almost invariably under murderous shell-fire, they contributed their toll of killed and wounded.

After Bullecourt came Havrincourt for the 2/1st, and Metz for the 2/2nd Field Company. Here comparative peace reigned, and the men recuperated. A few short weeks in these places, and they moved once more; this time to the Arras area. While the 58th Division completed a period of rest, the Engineers were attached for one month to the 12th Division, which held the Monchy-le-Preux area.

They then accompanied their own Division to Ypres, detraining at Poperinghe about the middle of August. The Division for which our Somerset Sappers were the "handy men," was prominent in all the fighting which happened around Ypres in that autumn and winter of 1917. It was in the "Battle of Menin Road Ridge" (20th September), the "Battle of Polygon Wood" (26th September). Exactly one month later it was in the assault on the Passchendale Ridge, advancing slowly and painfully over a great area of slimy mud, which often reached to the knees. In order to facilitate the passage of troops over these swampy areas the Sappers made miles and miles of "duck-board," and in the night carried them through the slime and fixed them in position. Next day the narrow track would be shelled and yards destroyed, and the Engineers, summoning their patience, would move up again and again and made good the damage.

In January, 1918, the two Field Companies accompanied the 58th Division to the River Oise, where a sector was taken over from the French. For the next two months the Sappers were busy strengthening defences in anticipation of the great German offensive. This opened on the 20th March, and the 2/1st Field Company went into the front line and fought with the 173rd Infantry Brigade, "which filled the space between Travecy on the left, and the Oise on the right." While this Brigade was meeting the attack of three enemy divisions, the 2/2nd Field Company was preparing the bridges across the Oise for demolition. On the night of the 21st it was decided to withdraw from the left bank of the river and destroy the crossings. A Corporal of one of the Companies was in charge of one bridge over which the last lot of British troops passed at dawn on the 22nd. He was not informed that there were no more troops to cross and, knowing the importance of keeping the bridge

intact until the last moment he waited until the Germans appeared 150 yards away moving forward rapidly. Then, under heavy machine-gun fire, he crawled on to the bridge, lit the fuse, and ran back to safety before the charge exploded.

After blowing up the bridges the 2/2nd Field Company helped the 175th Infantry Brigade to hold the trenches on the left flank of the French Army until relieved by a French Brigade.

Leaving the Valley of the Oise, the 58th Division was taken to the Amiens front and occupied trenches to the South of Villers Bretonneux, when that village was captured by the enemy on 24th April. After a period of refitting and recuperating in the Abbeville area, the Wessex Engineers marched once more to the front. Their Division then took part in the great battles which drove the enemy back over all the ground he had captured in March. Albert was retaken on the 22nd August, Hardecourt on the 28th ; the Division was in the Second Battle of Bapaume on the 31st, when Bouchavesnes, Rancourt and Fregicourt were taken, and took part in the Battles Havricourt and Epehy, 12th to 18th September.

Towards the end of September the 58th Division moved North to Lens. It took part in very little more fighting, for the enemy was rapidly becoming demoralised. In the crossing of the Varrues River, however, the Sappers had many casualties while throwing bridges across in the face of extremely heavy rifle and shell-fire. After this they followed up the retreating Germans, erecting temporary bridges where permanent ones had been destroyed and making good roads that had been blown up by land mines, until, on the 11th November, the Great Silence fell on the Western Front. The Sappers were then a few miles South of Mons, the place where the first British blood was shed in the War.

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The 1/3rd Wessex Field Company, commanded by Major W. Lane, and the 2/3rd Wessex Field Company, commanded by Major J. Garton, were raised at Taunton during September and October, 1915. Three officers and nine other ranks of the Cornwall Fortress Companies R.E. formed the nucleus of the 1/3rd Company, and the remainder of the Company and the 2/3rd Company were made up with National Reservists transferred from the Somerset Light Infantry, the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, and the Devon, Hants, and Wiltshire Regiments.

There was a deeper significance to these transfers than appears on the surface. Three County Territorial Associations had refused to raise the three lines of the 3rd Wessex R.E. before Somerset undertook the task. It was at a time when voluntary recruiting was on the decline, and it seemed impossible to recruit the necessary tradesmen. But Major Kennedy pointed out to the War Office that there were skilled men in Home Service Battalions and in the National Reserve, who were unfit for the hardships of the trenches, but would be fit for service overseas in a technical unit. He asked for authority for his representative to visit units and ask suitable men to transfer voluntarily to the Engineers.

This was a new idea, not provided for in the regulations, and the War Office hesitated to authorise such visits. Persistence, however, and the support of the G.O.C.-in-C., Southern Command, won Major Kennedy what he wanted. Appointing Major Garton as his representative, he sent him to the stations of the selected units. But the War Office authority was not such an "Open Sesame" after all. The men Major Garton sought were almost invariably the best in their units, and Commanding Officers were not disposed to let them go without a struggle. In one case Major Garton was refused admittance to the barracks where the men were. This sort of thing was expected, but Major Garton's persistence and never-failing good humour helped to overcome all difficulties. He got the men he wanted.

The dilution of the infantry with skilled tradesmen appears to have been overlooked by the Military Authorities, but soon after the men for the Wessex Engineers had been secured, an elaborate system for classifying men under trade groups was introduced. We may safely claim it to have been the result of Major Kennedy's representations.

A few drafts for the Wessex Engineers were also received from the Cornwall and Devon Fortress Companies R.E.

On the 13th October, the Companies left Taunton for Christchurch, where the 2/1st and 2/2nd Wessex Field Companies were training. They were met at the station by the Wessex R.E. Band, and marched into camp at Ilford. Life in camp during winter months is never pleasant, and during that month at Ilford the 1/3rd and 2/3rd Companies had a thoroughly miserable time. Towards the middle of November a gale blew down most of the tents, rain

fell for days, and the ground around the tents become a bog ; it was almost as bad within the tents where the men slept.

The two companies moved into billets in Christchurch on 15th November, and there training was carried on under more comfortable conditions. Their stay was not a long one, however, for on the 9th December, 1915, they joined the 57th Division in the neighbourhood of Canterbury. This Division formed part of the "Central Force" in the scheme for the Defence of Great Britain.

Throughout 1916 the Sappers learned all the technicalities connected with military engineering. At Brightlingsea they built bridges of all kinds and sizes, built them by day and built them by night—and in the morning saw the incoming tide wash them away ! But it was all experience, and the time came when they could span any river, no matter what the tide or the depth. Arm drill and musketry were carried out at Old Park Camp, Canterbury (January to March), defensive works were constructed at Sandwich (March to July), and they were inspected by H.M. the King at Aldershot on 23rd September.

In October the 2/3rd Company sunk an experimental mine on Frith Hill, near Aldershot. It was blown up by 5,000 lbs. of gun-cotton in the presence of many of the most eminent Generals, Sandhurst Cadets, and thousands of spectators.

The 1/3rd Field Company moved to Imber, a small village in the wilds of Salisbury Plain, on 16th January, 1917. In the vicinity of this village the Sappers built concrete dug-outs and gun-pits on which the destructive power of 9.2 inch howitzers was tested. The Company returned to Blackdown, near Aldershot, on the 31st January, and its advance party proceeded to France next day.

Leaving Southampton in the evening of the 12th February they reached Le Havre next morning. Detraining at Bailleul on the 15th they were for many months in the Armentieres area. They had charge of the drainage of their area, constructed billets, dug-outs, bivouacs and other habitations of men engaged in war ; supervised the digging of reserve trenches ; the making of camouflage screens, and experimented in the construction of light bridges for laying across trenches during raids. Many of these portable bridges were made and rejected until the 1/3rd Field Company at length succeeded in making one weighing "only sixteen pounds, capable of supporting ten people at the same time over a twelve foot gap."

This Field Company also had the distinction of putting up the first "Inglis" bridge ever erected for use in France. Constructed over the River Lys at Armentieres, it was 72 feet long, and capable of carrying anything up to a tank. The Company worked continuously for twenty-four hours in erecting it, and during the greater part of the time was watched by an enemy observation balloon. The Sappers were grateful the German observer did not direct his guns on them.

About the 16th September the Division moved back to the St. Hilaire Rest Area, where it was inspected in pouring rain by Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig on the 6th October.

Before the end of the month the two Companies were again in the front line area, occupying bivouacs and dug-outs built in the bank of the Yser Canal, about two miles North of Ypres. In these holes the Engineers became acquainted with that product of trench-life, the man-eating rat, a quadruped which not infrequently nibbled at men's faces and hands while they slept.

At this time the 2/1st and 2/2nd Field Companies were also in the Ypres area, and the Companies we are now dealing with were employed in almost exactly the same manner as the former. That employment can be summed up in one hyphenated word—"duck-boards." The two Companies were only in the Ypres sector a fortnight, but in that time they had several killed and wounded by shell-fire. The 1/3rd alone had two killed, two who died of wounds, and fourteen wounded.

On the 8th November the 57th Division moved back to a district between Calais and Boulogne, the 1/3rd Field Company being billeted in farms and barns at Hacquinghem.

After a month in this quiet area they moved once more, by lorries this time, to the Ypres sector, arriving at Boesinghe about 17th December. The countryside now was frost-bound, and "duck-boards" were no longer wanted, but the "handy men" found plenty to do in the preparation of drains for the snow when it melted.

On New Year's day they left their Nissen huts at Boesinghe, going by train to Bailleul, and marching from there to the Armentieres sector. A great deal of work was done in this area with reinforced concrete, several houses being lined in order to make them shell-proof. One section alone is said to have used upwards

of 400 tons of the material in the construction of an advanced dressing-station, in about a fortnight.

The enemy offensive of 1918 was expected almost any day during the latter part of February and March, and the Sappers were kept busy day by day erecting "pill boxes," concrete gun emplacements, and yards upon yards of wire entanglements.

By the end of March the long expected offensive had developed, and to the South of Armentieres the British line was forced back. Thither the 57th Division was sent on the night of the 30th-31st March. Scarcely a week had passed when the Germans extended their offensive, and Armentieres was evacuated. Up to the 19th April the 57th Division formed a mobile force in the Somme area, marching almost every day.

On the 6th May the Division took over a portion of the line in the Bucquoy sector, south of Arras. Here the Sappers made the acquaintance of the "Wessex Track," which had been constructed by the 1st Line Field Companies early in the war. Throughout May the 2/3rd Company was in the front line, occupying dug-outs in Stout Trench, Gommecourt. The Company lost so many men here from "trench fever," that it had to be reinforced by men from the 1/3rd Company. It was relieved by the latter on the 6th June, which suffered similarly. By the beginning of June the 1/3rd Field Company was reduced to half strength. On the 1st July the Company was relieved by New Zealand Engineers, and marched back to Bus-en-Artois to rest.

Arriving in the Arras District on 1st August, the 1/3rd Company was billeted in cellars in the town, while the 2/3rd stayed at Louez. The former Company had charge of the arrangements for the demolition of some caves in the vicinity of Arras. "One set consisted of five separate caves ; the other, of fifteen caves, which had been joined together by a tunnel one-and-a-half miles long. This tunnel had been constructed, we understood, by the New Zealander Engineers, for it was thought that the caves and tunnel together might prove of great military service as a means of underground movement, and communication, and as a shell-proof shelter for large bodies of troops. For the same reason it was important that in the event of a Boche attack he should be prevented from seizing and using them."\* During the Third Battle of Arras (April-May, 1917) no less than 50,000 troops were assembled in these caves.

\* Major Fox's *Narrative of the 502nd (Wessex) Field Company*.

When the 57th Division moved out of the Arras Sector on the 9th August, the 1/3rd Company remained behind for several days. During this time a local attack was made, and a party of Sappers "went over the top" with the infantry to discover "booby traps" and destroy them.

Towards the end of the month the Division moved south of Arras, capturing Hendecourt and Reincourt on the 29th. Following up this success it broke through the famous Drocourt-Queant Switch forcing the enemy out of Queant and Prouvelle. Open warfare followed, and the Engineer Companies became more or less independent in their activities, though they had to give the water supply their particular attention. In this connection the 1/3rd Company discovered a "water-dowser" in the person of 2nd Corporal A. H. Isgar. He "found" water in several places, the most important being an underground stream in the Sensee Valley, which supplied water for 6,000 animals per day, besides water-carts for the men. The 2/3rd Field Company at this time was engaged in repairing the German light railways which had been captured. They then spent a period of rest in the beautiful hamlets of Picardy.

The 57th Division took part in the "Battle of Cambrai and the Hindenburg Line" (27th September to 5th October), and both our Engineer Companies were prominent in throwing bridges across the Canal de L'Escaut. The 2/3rd was ordered to construct one at the North end of La Folie Wood. It had no materials at hand, but by utilising a barge and cutting down some trees the Sappers built a bridge strong enough for infantry and guns. Next day the other Company put up two more bridges near by; and shortly afterwards a heavy bridge was constructed over a double lock.

On the 10th October the Division was relieved, but three days later moved to the Fromelles District. It was just in time for the capture of Lille, which happened on the 17th. For several days after this the 1/3rd Company was engaged in the repair of the roads, which the Germans had blown up in several places. The 2/3rd assisted in the construction of bridges over the Haute Deule Canal.

On the 31st October, the Companies moved back to rest, and about the same time Captain W. J. M. Davison assumed command of the 2/3rd Company. During the greater part of its service in France the 1/3rd Field Company was commanded by Major C. L. Fox, M.C.

The Armistice put an end to fighting, but not an end to dangerous work for the Sappers. "Delay-action" mines still had to be located and rendered harmless, but happily this was accomplished without casualties.

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The 3rd Line Companies never left England. They were stationed at Christchurch throughout the war, and supplied the Active Service Companies with reinforcements. In the training of these they rendered invaluable work.

## CHAPTER VI.

## 4TH BN. SOMERSET LIGHT INFANTRY.\*

LIKE many other County Territorial Units the 4th Battalion was under canvas at Bulford, Salisbury Plain, when the war cloud burst over this country. Its strength then was 24 officers and 797 other ranks, which represented 85 per cent. and 81 per cent. respectively of its establishment. Within a few days of the 4th August the great influx of recruits caused these figures to be exceeded by several hundreds.

On the 5th August the Battalion entrained at Salisbury for Plymouth, its war station. For several days it guarded the magnificent Saltash Bridge, but, being relieved, it was divided into detachments and guarded the bridges on the South Devon section of the Great Western Railway. After a fortnight's absence from the Plain, the Battalion returned to Salisbury and marched to Durrington Camp. Training for War Service then began.

In September, 1914, it was decided that Territorials should be sent to India to relieve Regular units there for service in France. The Wessex Division, to which our 4th and 5th Battalions belonged, was the first Territorial Division to be chosen for this important duty. This choice expresses in no uncertain way the high esteem in which the units of the Division were held by the higher authorities.

The men were immediately asked to Volunteer for service overseas. A great many had, long before the war, accepted the obligation of Imperial Service ; and now all were asked to do so. The number of volunteers required was exceeded by many hundreds, as Infantry Battalions were not to go overseas in excess of the Indian

\* The information in this chapter is obtained chiefly from articles specially contributed to the *Bath Herald*, 10th May (1/4th Battalion), and 24th May, 1919 (2/4th Battalion). Edmund Chandler's *Long Road to Baghdad*, *The Official Record of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force*, and letters and records in the possession of the Somerset Territorial Army Association have also been consulted.

establishment of 816 other ranks. A great number were therefore disappointed, but they formed the nucleus of the 2/4th Battalion, which also went to India before the end of the year.

The 1/4th Battalion, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel W. C. Cox, sailed from Southampton on the *Braemer Castle* on the 9th October, the Wessex Division filling eleven transports. The convoy was escorted by British warships as far as Gibraltar, and was then taken over by the French Navy as far as Port Said. In the Suez Canal the Territorials met two Indian Divisions (British and Native troops) on their way to France. Bombay was reached on the 9th November, and the troops were disembarked two days later.

The Battalion at this time was organised on the eight-company system, and headquarters and four companies were stationed at Fort St. George, Madras. Of the others, two and a half were at Wellington, while the remainder formed two small detachments at Malapuram and Calicut.

The troops at Madras and Wellington were relieved by the 2/4th Devons on the 12th January, 1915, and the Battalion moved to Jullunder. Owing to trouble in Lahore it was kept in the sweltering plains during the summer of 1915, and to cope with the unrest a detachment was stationed at Amritsar, the scene of much more serious trouble in 1919. While at Jullunder the Battalion provided a detachment of 59 other ranks, under Lieutenant G. W. R. Bishop as reinforcements for the 2nd Battalion Dorset Regiment, which was fighting in Mesopotamia. Subsequently, another draft of 25 other ranks was sent to the same Regiment.

In August, 1915, there was trouble in the Mohmand country, and on the 20th the 1/4th Somersets were ordered to Peshawar to reinforce the Regular Regiments in that area. Later they went into camp on the Afghan frontier. They were then at no great distance from Jellalabad, the place where the Somerset Light Infantry won for themselves laurels that will remain for ever green. During this period the Battalion moved over the frontier and held a strong position at Abezai. The members of the Battalion who went there thus became entitled to the 1914-15 Star.

The Battalion marched to Nowshera in January, 1916, and there formed part of the Frontier Force. This suggested a permanency to their stay which was not altogether appreciated. It was not with any great zest that the Battalion commenced the special training designed for hill warfare.

The training had scarcely begun, however, when, on 4th February, the 1/4th Somersets were informed that they had been chosen for service with "D" Force, as the Mesopotamian Army was called.

Leaving Karachi in two boats on the 16th and 17th February, the Battalion landed at Basra on the 21st and 22nd. A few days later it embarked on two river boats and barges, which were lashed to the boats' sides, and proceeded up the most interesting river in the world—the Tigris. Passing first through beautiful fertile country, where date palms grew prolifically, the Somersets came to Qurna, the reputed site of the Garden of Eden. Beyond this place the river wound through almost endless stretches of swamp and desert, where scarcely any trees grew, and the only green things to be seen were the reeds growing in the marshes. In the midst of this, in a little oasis of palm trees, they passed the Tomb of Ezra, the scribe, High Priest of the Jews, who were taken into exile by Nebuchadnezzar, 586 B.C. On through a country of mud-walled houses, stunted palms, willows and mulberry trees, watered by irrigation channels, to Amara, where the British flag flew over the Turkish barracks.

One hundred and twenty miles of river had still to be traversed, and it lay through a land of utter desolation ; mud-coloured land on every side, cracked and rutted by the sun. The Somersets passed Sheik Saad, where the Force which was trying to relieve the Kut garrison sustained 4,000 casualties—half the number of the troops it was seeking to relieve. A little beyond this place they reached their destination, Orah. One of the boats met with the common fate of boats on the Tigris—it ran into a mud-bank, and half the Battalion arrived several days after the other half.

The 1/4th Somersets were now in the 37th Infantry Brigade, and were very soon brought into the operations for the relief of Kut-el-Amara. They had a great incentive to do their utmost to succour the garrison, for it included the 2nd Dorsets, to which the Battalion had sent reinforcements the previous summer.

On the night of the 7th March the Relieving Force began a remarkable night march to attack at dawn the Dujaila Redoubt. This march through the darkness has nothing to compare with it in the history of the British Army.

At sunset on the 7th, 20,000 men began to assemble at the Pools of Siloam. One hour and a half after the scheduled time they

began their march of nearly fifteen miles ; with the march to the concentration posts it amounted in some cases to more than twenty miles. Divided into three Columns—A, B and C—they marched slowly through the darkness under the direction of a single man. The 1/4th Somersets were the leading troops of "B" Column. Utter silence prevailed except for the howl of a jackal, the cry of frightened geese, or the rattle of equipment quickly stilled. Marching with perfect discipline, every one was at first awed with a feeling of interest and speculation as to where they were going, but the long march over the rough ground and in complete darkness dragged on till each man felt he was walking in a dream with thousands of others who seemed asleep. When at last dawn broke, and the march was ended, men quietly greeted those next to them as though they had just awakened.

The direction of the march was perfectly maintained, and just before dawn the flank guards passed among Arab encampments unchallenged and unsuspected. A little beyond the Turkish camp fires were burning and farther on the British could see the flashing of Townshend's guns in Kut. The surprise was complete, and the enemy was thrown into confusion.

The 1/4th Battalion lay out in front of practically empty trenches all the morning, firing rapidly at the Redoubt in order to cover the attacks of Brigades on either side. The air reconnaissance showed that when the Somersets and 1/2nd Gurkhas arrived there was only a picket in the Redoubt. But the units' orders, the implicit obedience of which had made the march such an unqualified success, were too rigid in the end ; they had definite orders not to take the Redoubt until other points of vantage had been captured. The result was that there streamed into it, and the trenches around, thousands of Turkish troops, fresh from a night's rest. The men, who were weary after a march of twenty or more miles, did not become refreshed as the day grew and the power of the sun increased. Their scanty water supply dwindled. By mid-day the enemy's gun and rifle fire had increased to such intensity that the Battalion expected to be heavily engaged in the climax of the attack at any moment.

About noon two platoons of the Battalion suffered many casualties trying to clear the ground in front of enemy snipers. At 4.30 p.m. the 8th Brigade attacked on the right. It succeeded in occupying the enemy's front line trenches, and the Somersets were

ordered to move up in line. The 8th Brigade, however, was bombed out of the trenches it had occupied, and the 1/4th Battalion had to be withdrawn. Returning to the shallow trenches it had occupied all day, the Battalion held on till night fell. Then the whole force was withdrawn from the Redoubt, and the Kut garrison, so sanguine of relief in the morning, was once again doomed to disappointment.

The Battalion's casualties that day consisted of Captains Egbert Lewis, A. H. Baker, and Sec.-Lieutenants C. T. Lillington, with 9 other ranks killed ; 5 officers and 50 men wounded, and 4 other ranks missing. This was a big proportion of the Battalion's strength of nearly 500.

Early in the afternoon of the 9th the retreat to El Orah commenced. The severely wounded were placed in mule carts, and the twenty miles' journey was for them a prolonged agony, as the springless vehicles jolted over the uneven ground. Many bled to death from haemorrhage set up by the rough journey.

The 1/4th Somersets were in the rearguard during the retirement. While fighting their way back a battalion on their right had many casualties from shrapnel-fire ; and the Somersets entrenched themselves and held the enemy off while the wounded were collected. El Orah was reached in the early hours of the 10th.

Next day the Battalion was in reserve in the Sinna position, while the enemy's advance posts were driven back. It was not called into the firing line, but a day or so later the Somersets took over the Sinna position and remained in the trenches during the greater part of March. The wet season had now set in, and the troops had little or no protection from the weather. A great deal of sickness prevailed, and the Battalion was reduced considerably in strength.

In the beginning of April it was attached to the 3rd (Lahore) Division, which was also weak. On the 5th April, the 13th Division, of Gallipoli fame, captured the Umm el Hannah position, and with great dash carried the Falahiyeh trenches. Fighting continued for days, and the Somersets, on the right bank of the river, advanced across marshy ground about half a mile every two or three days.

On the 12th the Turks broke down the banks of the Tigris and flooded the land in front of them. As night fell that day the Somersets were asked to advance through this flood and capture the enemy position beyond. "C" (Weston-super-Mare) Company led

the way. The water reached to the men's waists, and, when crossing two depressions in the ground, it came up to their shoulders. Rifles were held high above the head. As they advanced they were met with shell and rifle-fire; many men were wounded, and great difficulty was experienced in getting them back to dry land. Darkness made their progress slow, but the trenches were reached at last and the enemy promptly evacuated them. The Battalion then dispersed a nest of machine guns which was holding up the unit on the left. After the officers of "C" Company were rendered casualties, the Company was successfully commanded by Company-Sergeant-Major Davis.

All this was carried out in pitch darkness, and after the trenches were won there was much movement over the sodden ground in order to conform with units on either side. The Battalion's casualties consisted of 6 other ranks killed; 2 officers and 25 other ranks wounded; and 1 man missing.

The Battalion held this position until the 16th, when it was relieved to support the attack on the Beit Aieesa position next day. This entailed much marching over flooded areas and under heavier shell-fire than any of the men had experienced before. About mid-day they took over a position near the Beit Aieesa trenches, which earlier in the day had been captured with great loss to the enemy. There was little shell-fire during the afternoon, but it developed as darkness set in, and was followed up by a most determined counter-attack on the part of the Turks. They came on in dense masses, directing their full weight against the British troops holding the river bank. The Somersets, therefore, had but little share in the signal defeat which the enemy sustained. The situation at one time was critical, but through prodigies of valour on the part of our Indian troops the Turkish masses were mowed down. When the following day dawned the Somersets saw the enemy retreating to his Sinn Aftar trenches, having lost the greater part of two divisions.

In the Beit Aieesa operations the Battalion lost 3 killed and 30 wounded. Among the latter was the Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Colonel W. C. Cox, who was wounded in the arm soon after noon on the 17th.

The Relieving Force was moving forward rapidly now, but it was all too slow. A third fruitless attack at Sunnyait, on the left bank of the river, shattered all hope of an early relief of Kut. On the 24th April the paddle steamer *Julnar* raced up the river laden

with food for the starving garrison. It was held up by steel hawsers stretched across the river, and its gallant pilot fell, mortally wounded.

Five days later Townshend sent out by wireless his tragic message : " Have destroyed my guns and am destroying most of my munitions, and have sent out officers to Khalil to say am ready to surrender. Khalil is at Madug. I am unable to hold out any more. I must have some food here. I have told Khalil to-day, and have sent launch with deputation to bring food from *Julnar*."\* Thus Kut fell, and many Somerset men, drafted from the 1/4th and 1/5th Battalions while in India, were led away into captivity. Very few survived to return to the Somerset homes they loved.

Active operations on the Tigris now ceased, and in the beginning of May the 1/4th Battalion went back to Basra. Here many welcome drafts from the 2/4th and 1/5th Battalions brought it once more up to establishment. Moving out to Shaiba in July, many of the men became victims of an epidemic of Beri-beri. This prevented the Battalion returning to Kut and taking part in its capture and the march on Baghdad.

In April, 1917, the Battalion moved up to Nasiriye, on the Euphrates. Near this place the river Shatt-el-Hai joins the Euphrates, thereby connecting it with the Tigris at Kut. At Nasiriye the Battalion spent twelve very pleasant months, and they were uneventful but for occasional " demonstrations " when unfriendly Arabs became restive or quarrelled among themselves.

Just before leaving this place Lieut.-Colonel W. C. Cox was invalided to India. He remained there throughout the remaining months of the war, but on his way home in April, 1919, he had a relapse, and was landed in Egypt ; there, to the great regret of his Battalion, he succumbed to his illness. Major Proctor, K.R.R.C., commanded the Battalion until it was taken over by Lieut.-Colonel L. H. Stone, 2nd Batt. Somerset Light Infantry, on the 6th April, 1918.

In March, 1918, the 1/4th Battalion was relieved by the 1/6th Devons, and proceeded by way of Basra and Baghdad to Hilleh. It had no sooner arrived at its destination than it was sent thirty miles into the desert to besiege Nejef, the holy city of the Shiite Mohammedans. German intrigue had brought about a rebellion of Arab tribesmen in this district. Besides creating unrest in the Euphrates

\* Chandler's *Long Road to Baghdad*, Vol. I.

valley, this had resulted in the murder of the British political officer at Nejef. It was to avenge this that the 53rd Brigade, with the 1/4th Somersets attached, had been ordered to occupy the town.

The place could not be shelled owing to religious scruples, for its magnificent mosque contained the tomb of Ali, the son-in-law of Mohomet. But machine guns continually fired on the houses which rose above the city walls, and the inhabitants, for the most part inoffensive devotees at the shrine of Ali, were kept in a continuous state of suspense. The Somersets had a company in the house of the murdered political officer on which most of the Arab fire was directed. There was no fighting, however, and the city did not hold out long ; 200 rebels were handed over, and Nejef was again peaceful, as becomes a holy place. Eleven of the ringleaders were hanged, and to prevent further disturbances the Somerset Battalion was detailed to garrison the town.

The Battalion left Nejef in October, and moved by train from Baghdad to Tekrit. The hope that it would see the final round up of the Turks was not fulfilled ; only the Lewis gun detachments saw further fighting. These were conveyed about in Ford cars and co-operated with the armoured cars.

The Somersets were employed in extending the railway when the Armistice came into force. Shortly afterwards they moved down to Baghdad, and from thence up the River Diala to the pleasantly-situated town of Mirjanna. Here demobilisation commenced, and when the Battalion had been reduced to cadre strength it proceeded to Basra, arriving there on 15th March, 1919.

The cadre left Basra in the *Port Lyttleton*, and arrived in Plymouth on the 2nd May. Proceeding immediately to Bath, it received such a welcome from the city which claims the Battalion as its own, that the event will be remembered by the inhabitants for many a year, and can never be forgotten by those to whom it was extended.

\* \* \* \* \*

The 2/4th Battalion may be said to have come into being on 30th September, 1914, when Colonel H. F. Clutterbuck arrived at Durrington Camp to take over the men of the 1/4th Battalion who could not go to India. Colonel Clutterbuck was a former Commanding Officer of the 4th Somersets, and he set about the raising of the 2/4th with vigour. Gathering around him equally zealous ex-Territorial and ex-Volunteer officers, he had the satisfaction of

seeing his Battalion reach its establishment before any other 2nd Line Battalion in the West of England.

The Battalion had moved to Bath in October, and it was from that ancient City that it departed for India on the 12th December, 1914. Off Gibraltar the transport (*Saturnia*) ran into a banana boat. This caused it to be delayed for a day; and resulted in a lonely voyage through the Mediterranean, for the accompanying transports had not waited. Christmas Day was spent at Port Said, but it is remembered by many as a particularly "black" day, for it was spent in coaling.

Bombay was reached early in January, 1915, and the Battalion immediately moved by rail to Bangalore. Detachments were sent to Calicut and Malapuram, relieving the detachments of the 1/4th Battalion which were there. The troops at Malapuram had to deal with an abortive rising of the Moplahs, a Mohammedan community of Arab extraction. A mobile column was formed under the command of Captain E. W. Farwell, but the disturbances were quelled by the native police.

In August the Battalion was suddenly placed on a war footing. There was great uncertainty as to its destination, but it proved to be the Andaman Islands, where an enemy raid was expected. Two companies were stationed on Ross Island and two on Aberdeen Island.

The Andaman Islands form a penal settlement of the Indian Government, and the Somersets had the unique experience of seeing murderers and other dangerous criminals walking about the islands, virtually free. Convicts were allotted to the officers of the Regiment as servants.

On 13th October Colonel Clutterbuck was invalidated to the South of France, and Lieut.-Colonel J. M. E. Waddy took command.

The defence of the islands was greatly augmented by warships, and the threatened enemy attack did not materialise. The remainder of the year passed by, and nothing happened more alarming than the sound of gunnery some distance out at sea. Early in January, 1916, the Battalion left the islands for Calcutta, and moved from thence to Dinapore. Detachments were sent to Barrackpore and Dum-Dum. The usual life of an Indian garrison followed. The Battalion emerged successfully from "Kitchener's Test"; a guard of honour for the Viceroy was found at Banikur. Colonel Clutter-

buck returned, and took command on the 17th July, and shortly afterwards he commanded a Column, composed mainly of 1/4th and 2/4th men, which marched through the Banikpur neighbourhood when it was simmering with unrest. Before the column returned to Dinapore, however, cholera broke out, and the Battalion had twenty or more affected with the plague.

The men of the 1/4th Battalion returning sick or wounded from Mesopotamia were formed into a depot at Dinapore. This depot was commanded first by Major Graves-Knyfton and later by Capt. T. B. Timmins. As the men became fit for service they were drafted back to the Battalion in Mesopotamia. The 2/4th also provided drafts for its 1st Line, and during 1916 these were estimated to amount to six officers and more than eight hundred men.

Orders to proceed to Egypt were received in May, 1917, but just as the Battalion was ready to move to Bombay for embarkation it was ordered into the Lahore district owing to a rising of the Mahsuds. The Battalion was to have moved to the Waziristan frontier, but this was cancelled, and the 2/4th Somersets remained at Lahore, furnishing detachments for Amritsar, Ferozepore and Lahore Port. Lieutenants Richard and N. Fortt were attached to the Sussex Regiment and took part in the operations in Waziristan.

After spending August under canvas at Poona, the Battalion moved to Bombay in September, and, under the command of Colonel H. F. Clutterbuck, embarked for Egypt. Disembarking at Suez, it was transported in cattle trucks to Kantara. In October the Battalion commenced its long journey across Sinai to the Holy Land, and was allotted to the 232nd Brigade of the 75th Division.

The 2/4th Somersets' first experience of warfare came with three weeks' occupation of trenches around Gaza. It was in the Goliath Ridge position when the final bombardment commenced. The enemy was squeezed out of the town by the capture of Beer-sheba, and the Sheria-Abu Heriera line, so the 2/4th Battalion did not have to make a punishing frontal attack such as marked the Second Battle of Gaza. When the Turks had retired the Battalion occupied their trenches on Middlesex Hill at 11.20 p.m. on the 7th November. Next morning it bivouacked on Ali Muntar, the main bastion in the Gaza defences, and from its summit the officers and men watched the thrilling charge of the Yeomanry at Huj.

The same day the 2/4th Somersets began to follow up the retreating enemy. On the 12th November they were in support while the 52nd Division attacked and captured Burkah. On the following day they were themselves in the forefront of the battle for Yasur and Mesmiye. This was the first time the Battalion had advanced in the face of the enemy, and though high explosive shells burst amongst them and shrapnel swept their ranks, the men pressed on without faltering. The first objective was reached, and the Battalion reformed while Mesmiye was captured by the 1/5th Somersets. Then they moved on to the second objective. Three hundred and fifty yards from this point they were met with a fearful hail of bullets, and still figures were left behind as the survivors moved on. Two hundred and fifty yards from the goal the machine-gun fire increased in volume and became more deadly; the men halted and lay on the ground. It was impossible to advance further. For two hours they endured the agony of waiting, until a Battalion worked round the enemy's left flank, and he had to go. Although the shell and rifle-fire had been terrific, the Battalion's casualties that day amounted only to 35 killed and wounded, most of which had been caused by machine gun and rifle fire. The Battalion bivouacked that night on the ground it had gained.

On the 19th Colonel Clutterbuck was invalided to Cairo, and never rejoined the Battalion, greatly to his regret. The Battalion was commanded by Captain Bealey until he was killed on the 21st, then Major L. K. Bunting rejoined and took command.

The 20th November is a red letter day in the history of the 2/4th Battalion. On this day it won its spurs. The task set the Battalion was the storming the village of Saris, which lay on the side of a steep hill, and was held by an enemy force of more than 2,000. Up the precipitous approach the 2/4th Somersets dashed, with bayonets fixed, at 2.15 p.m. The 2/5th Hants and 58th Rifles made an enveloping movement, while the Somersets ran straight for the village. The enemy's defence was very stubborn, but that only added to his casualties. The Somerset men overcame all obstacles and in a very short time the village was in their hands. Over fifty prisoners, including a battalion commander, were taken, and the enemy dead, mingled with our own, lay about on every side.

Next day the Battalion made a demonstration against the enemy and he fled. This enabled the Battalion to capture Kurstal, a strategic position only four miles from Jerusalem. It was not a

comfortable place to be in for the enemy vented the full fury of his guns on the village, and shells burst in and around it unceasingly. It was here that Captain Bealey fell, and Captain Harford was severely wounded.

On the 26th and 27th November the 57th Division was relieved by the 60th (London) Division, much to the annoyance of the former ; the fall of the Holy City was imminent, and the West Countrymen wanted the honour of taking it. The fact that the 75th Division had made the capture of Jerusalem inevitable was afterwards recognised by permitting the Division to adopt a Key ("the Golden Key of Jerusalem") as its sign.

The 2/4th Battalion moved back to Ramleh, where an outpost line was taken over by "B" Company. "A" Company was employed in the protection of the guns, while "C" and "D" Companies supported an attack of the 2/3rd Gurkhas on Budros. Lieut.-Colonel E. B. Powell took over command of the Battalion on the 12th December.

On the 15th the 75th Division advanced and the 2/4th Somersets occupied Bornat. They came under a dangerous enfilade fire, which caused three men to be killed and ten wounded. Another advance was made on the 22nd, and the Battalion reached "Horseshoe" Ridge. Christmas was spent here, and on the following day the 1/5th Somersets took over the Battalion's position. Returning to Surafend it was employed for some time in making a new road from Ramleh to Ludd.

Although they occupied trenches from time to time the 2/4th Somersets were not engaged in further fighting until March 6th. Then they moved to Kurbat Azazi in preparation for the advance of the Division. On the 11th and 12th the Battalion captured El Diurah, Rentis, and took part in the fighting in the Wadi Deir Ballut beyond Rentis, where Mughoir Ahmeh was also taken. So demoralised was the enemy at this time that there was practically no opposition, and the Battalion's casualties were only one killed and one wounded.

The 9th April found the Battalion engaged in the Battle of Berukin. The premier objective was "Tin Hat" Hill. The attacking troops had first to descend a steep slope into a wadi, and then up the steep sides of the hill to the almost impregnable position which the enemy held. He was silent until the Battalion reached

the narrow river bed soon after 4.30 a.m. Then he turned his machine guns on the dense mass as the Battalion reformed. Fired on from above, and enfiladed from both flanks, the Somersets suffered many casualties ; and the wadi became a trench of death. But, held up though they were for a time, the 2<sup>nd</sup> 4th Somersets were not dismayed, and, pressing on up the hill, they had the satisfaction of seeing the Turks and Germans vacating their trenches. " Tin Hat " Hill was captured at 10 a.m., and " Necklace " Hill had been taken by " C " Company earlier in the morning. The 1<sup>st</sup> 5th Devons then moved up and captured Berukin just before dusk. The enemy counter-attacked during the night, and the Devons were forced out of part of the village. " C " Company of the 2<sup>nd</sup> 4th Somersets helped in the recovery of the lost ground.

This was the last engagement in which the Battalion took part in the Holy Land, for it was one of three battalions of the 75th Division which were chosen to reinforce the Army in France and Belgium. Leaving for Kantara on the 2nd May, the 2<sup>nd</sup> 4th Battalion embarked on the *Ormonde* at Port Said, and started for France on the 23rd. Marseilles was reached on the 1st June.

The first month or so in France was spent in training for the new type of warfare which was before them. But when drafts had brought the Battalion up to establishment, it was transformed into the Pioneer Battalion of the 34th Division. Its destiny was not work but fighting, however, for about the middle of July the Battalion was attached to the 102nd Infantry Brigade, and with its Division (the 34th) fought with the 10th French Army under Mangin.

Mangin's Army had already commenced the smashing blows which were to force the Germans back from the Marne, the limit of their advance in the early part of July, and the 34th British Division came into the Battle as a counter to the fresh German troops which had been thrown into the death-struggle.

The 2/4th Battalion was twice in reserve before it led an attack on Beugneux. It captured an old French trench, but could advance no further on account of the troops on each flank being held up. For two days the men huddled against the wall of the trench while the enemy shelled and " gassed " them continuously. They were relieved by the Cheshire on the 30th June, but next day saw the result of the French artillery's unceasing bombardment which had claimed a heavy toll of enemy lives, and had shattered the fighting

spirit of the survivors. The Germans began their demoralising retreat from the Marne ; and the 2/4th Somersets advanced once more and occupied Beugneux.

The Battalion's achievements on the Marne cannot be summed up by the list of successes, but the men maintained the reputation of Somerset men for courage and steadiness under extraordinarily trying circumstances. If the capture of Beugneux was denied them on the 28th June, through the impotency of other units in the face of insurmountable obstacles, they held on tenaciously and strengthened the defences they had captured. Thus they helped in the final defeat of the enemy on the Marne.

The 2/4th Somersets rested at St. Jan Sterbezen until the 20th of August, and then moved to Ypres. By the end of the month, however, they were engaged in the fighting around Kemmel Hill. They helped to drive the enemy back over the Messines Ridge, the River Lys and Canal de L'Escaut, smashing him with hammer blows, until in despair he turned upon his own High Priests of the God of Might, and, casting them out, sued for peace. At this time the Battalion was under the command of Lieut.-Colonel A. W. Reid, Royal Engineers, who had succeeded Lieut.-Colonel Powell in September.

When the Armistice came into force, the Battalion was in the Belgium village of Wevelghem. In January, 1919, it was selected to form part of the Army of Occupation, and was stationed for a short time at Bonn and then at Troisdorf, near Cologne. While at the latter place a colour party was sent to Bath to receive from the Mayor the Colours of the 4th Battalion, and the 2/4th Somersets had the satisfaction of carrying them into enemy country. In addition, the Battalion was presented with a King's Colour (the Union Flag) by His Majesty the King, in common with all other New Army Battalions on the Rhine.

Eventually the time came for the Battalion's dissolution. All the men who could not be demobilized were transferred to the 15th Hants, and the cadre left for England. Disembarking at Tilbury Docks on the 27th May, the Cadre arrived in Bath at 4.40 p.m. on the 2nd June, and received a welcome from the City, not a wit less than that accorded the 1/4th Battalion exactly one month earlier. The Regimental Colours were handed back to the Mayor, and the Battalion's own King's Colour was handed into his keeping.

The 3/4th Battalion Somerset L.I. was formed early in 1915 as a draft-finding for the 1st and 2nd Lines serving in Mesopotamia and India. In 1917 it was amalgamated with the 3/5th Battalion, and formed the 4th (Reserve) Battalion Somerset Light Infantry. During the latter part of the war the 4th (Reserve) Battalion was stationed at Oswestry, and provided drafts for both Regular and Territorial Battalions of the Somerset L.I. Occasionally, drafts were also sent to other Regiments. In the training of these drafts and the fitting out of men sent home on account of wounds and sickness the Reserve Battalion rendered good service.

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No history of the 4th Batt. Somerset Light Infantry can ever be complete unless it honours the memory of Captain James Thomas Bradfield.

This officer was a native of Frome, and commenced his military service as a private in the 2/4th Battalion. Reaching the rank of Corporal, he was recommended for a commission. This recommendation was approved and forwarded by the County Association on 17th December, 1915.

He served with the 1/4th Battalion in Mesopotamia, and after the war appears to have been employed with the Arab Levies which were then being raised. The year 1920 is remarkable for the number of insurrections by the nomad Arab tribes. They were mostly isolated, but broke out in all parts of Mesopotamia.

There was a certain amount of unrest in the neighbourhood of Shahrain, sixty miles N.W. of Baghdad, and Captain Bradfield was sent there to protect a line of communication. The small party under him consisted of Captain W. G. Wrigley, a political officer ; Sergeant-Major W. E. Newton, 1/4th Batt. Dorset Regiment ; Sergeant Nisbet, of the Police ; and nine men of the Arab Levies, thirteen men all told.

Each man carried 200 rounds of ammunition, and the party took a reserve supply of 4,000 rounds, and a quantity of food and water.

Captain Bradfield protected his position with trenches and barbed wire, although he did not expect very serious trouble. Into this refuge Mr. E. L. Buchanan, an irrigation officer, and his wife were driven by the hostile attitude of the natives, and about noon on the 12th August, 1920, the little outpost was surrounded by an

overwhelming number of rebellious Arabs. Captain Bradfield was called upon to surrender, and thus save the lives of himself and his English companions. Such clemency did not extend to his Arabs, however, and simple, ignorant men of the desert though they were, he did not forget they were his comrades in arms. That is a friendship fear of death should never break, and Captain Bradfield had only one answer—no surrender.

For three days and three sleepless nights they fought. They littered the desert with Arab dead ; but in spite of that the enemy grew in numbers. For three days and three nights they bore their agony with simple fortitude, knowing the inevitable end. On the morning of the 15th the last round was fired, and then the maddened wild men of the desert rushed into their trenches and killed without mercy. Only Mrs. Buchanan was spared.\*

That night darkness spread its shroud over the lifeless shells of men who remained steadfast to the most ancient rule of chivalry. To them honour was holy : therefore all honour is their due.

\* *Daily Mail*, September 1st, 1920.

## CHAPTER VII.

## 5TH BN. SOMERSET LIGHT INFANTRY.\*

THE 5th Battalion Somerset L.I. was in camp at Bulford in August, 1914, when orders were received to mobilise. The strength of the Battalion at that time was 22 officers and 902 other ranks, which represented 78 per cent. and 91 per cent. respectively of its establishment. The 6 officers and 80 other ranks required to complete the Battalion were soon forthcoming when the issue between Great Britain and Germany was no longer in doubt.

As in the case of the 4th Battalion, the war station of the 5th Somersets was Plymouth, and with the former unit they proceeded there on the 5th August. After guarding important points in and around the forts of the town for a week, the 5th Battalion returned to Salisbury Plain and recommenced training.

Forming part of the famous Wessex Division, the Battalion, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel E. F. Cooke-Hurle, accompanied it to India, sailing in the *Alnwick Castle* from Southampton on the 9th October.

We would pass rapidly over the next two years, as the Battalion's experiences were in no way different from those of other units employed on garrison duty in our great Eastern Empire. Training in sweltering heat, manœuvres, inspections, athletic meetings, concert parties, and summers spent in the invigorating air of the hills were routine features of 1915 and 1916. The Somerset Light Infantry have always been conspicuous in the Indian Army Football Leagues, and when the 1/5th Battalion won the Calcutta Cup in 1916, it well maintained the Regiment's reputation. Drafts were provided for the Mesopotamian Force from time to time; one, consisting of one officer (Lieut. E. S. Goodland) and 30 other ranks, going to the 2nd Dorsets in April, 1915, formed part of the ill-fated

\* This chapter is compiled from MS. accounts supplied by the 1/5th and 2/5th Battalions. We have made notes from the War Correspondence, the Operation Orders, Intelligence Reports, and Forms of Recommendation of the 1/5th. The Official Record of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force was also consulted.

garrison of Kut. Lieut. Goodland was invalided to Basra before the investment of Kut, and later rejoined his Battalion. Another draft of 25 other ranks went to Mesopotamia in August, 1915, and in October, 1916, the 1/4th Battalion was reinforced by two officers and 150 other ranks.

During its stay in India the Battalion was stationed in turn at Jubbulpore (Central Provinces), at Ambala (in the Punjab), and Meerut (in the United Provinces), and in the hills at Daghshai and Chakrata. The 1/5th Somersets were training between Rawal Pindi and Peshawar when, in January, 1917, they were told they had been chosen for sterner work, and were to prepare for active service.

Embarking at Bombay on the 26th April, it was not until the ship was well out to sea that the unit knew its destination. It was then revealed to be the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, in Palestine. Suez was reached on 6th May, and after refitting at Cairo, the Battalion joined the 233rd Brigade of the newly-formed 75th Division, in which, it will be remembered, the 2/4th Battalion was also serving. Several weeks' training was carried out at El Arish and Rafa, where the troops did long route marches through the burning desert.

The Battalion took over a portion of the trenches around Gaza in August. On the night of the 6th-7th October it was concerned in a raid on some "Old British Trenches." The raiding party consisted of 200 men of the Battalion, and the adventure was planned and commanded throughout by Captain E. S. Goodland. The enemy trenches were two miles away, and the raiders crept within 50 yards of the Turks before their presence was discovered. As soon as they were fired on they dashed into the enemy's trenches, killing some 18 to 20 Turks. The 1/5th Somersets had only one casualty. Sergeant J. Gardiner, formerly of the 1st Battalion, was killed, and when Pte. E. Haysham saw his Section Sergeant fall he led the Section. He bayoneted two of the enemy, and when the order came to withdraw he carried back his Sergeant's dead body. The complete success of the raid with only a single casualty, when many killed and wounded were expected, was mainly due to the organisation and able leadership of Captain Goodland.

At 11.30 p.m. on the 6th November the 233rd Brigade attacked Outpost Hill and Middlesex Hill. This was the beginning of a

series of attacks which had as their object the capture of Gaza. Very little opposition was met with, and when the two hills had been captured patrols discovered that Gaza was unoccupied. In the days that followed the 1/5th Somersets followed up the retreating enemy. There was always great difficulty in getting up rations and water. The transport would travel all night, and often could only reach the Battalion a few minutes before it was time to move on again. Water had to be fetched from wells ten miles or more away.

On the 13th, while the 2/4th were attacking between Yasur and Mesmiye, the 1/5th Battalion assaulted and captured the latter village, and the Brigade was able to push on 1,000 yards beyond the village. Seven machine guns and 292 prisoners fell to the Brigade that day. The capture of Mesmiye foiled the enemy attempt to hold Junction Station, and this important Junction on the Jaffa-Jerusalem Railway was taken on the following day.

The 75th Division remained in the vicinity of Junction Station until the thrust towards Jerusalem began on the 19th November. Latron and Amwas were captured, and then began hill-warfare, where all the advantage lay with the enemy. The road from Latron to Jerusalem runs through a series of narrow ravines flanked by precipitous cliffs or rock-strewn slopes. As the advance progressed the temperature fell and rain poured down hour after hour. The troops were without greatcoats to protect them from the storm, wearing "shorts" and thin Indian drill. They had no blankets for use at night. To make matters worse, little artillery support could be given them, for the roads and tracks quickly became impassable. In the face of these odds the men of Somerset advanced and fought.

After Saris had been stormed by our 2/4th Battalion on the 20th, the Turks took up a strong position on a ridge protecting Kuryet el Enab. Under ordinary circumstances the position would have been almost impregnable to troops attacking without artillery preparation ; but a thick fog enveloped the top of the hill, and under cover of this the 1/5th Somersets, 1/4th Wilts, and 2/3rd Gurkhas deployed ready to attack at 5 p.m. Up into the mist they climbed, while the troops in the valley watched anxiously the point where they had disappeared. They heard the firing, but could not see how their comrades fared, until the rifle-fire ceased and they heard a very decided British cheer. Within an hour the ridge and the

village of Kuryet el Enab were captured, and the Nablus-Jerusalem Road—the enemy's sole line of retreat to the North from the Holy City—was in danger.

Next day Nebi Samwil, the Mountjoye of the Crusaders, was stormed by the 234th Brigade, and the 75th Division thus reached the furthermost point attained by Richard Coeur de Lion's Crusade in January, 1192.

On the 22nd the Turks tried to retake Nebi Samwil, and launched three very strong counter-attacks, throwing into the battle regiment after regiment. They all failed, and after hours of bitter fighting the 75th Division, broken though it was, still held Nebi Samwil.

The Nebi Samwil, called Mountjoye, was the tomb of many a Crusader ; the tomb was to open once more and enclose many another Crusader in this Twentieth Century, who had been reared amid the hills and valleys and marches of old Somerset. The 23rd November dawned misty and cold. But no time was to be lost, and the 1/5th Somersets had orders to capture the village of El Jib. Little artillery support could be given, for still the guns could not be got over the rocky ground. Thus against an enemy strongly entrenched and little damaged, the 1/5th Battalion advanced. They had scarcely left their trenches when the enemy poured into them a murderous shell and rifle fire ; men fell, but others struggled on until they fell to the ground seeking what scanty cover they could. Other waves followed with the same result. Men were wounded twice, thrice and even four times, and no aid could be got to them. The slightest movement brought a hail of bullets or a salvoe of shells. Night came and made movement possible ; then the helpless wounded struggled to stick their rifles in the ground—the sign of the afflicted. One company lost all its officers, and Sergt. Jennings collected the few men that remained and carried back the wounded, working all the time under heavy rifle fire.

The Battalion had 68 killed on this tragic day, and, to quote the words of an officer who was there, " We had so many wounded that we could not stop to count them." They were estimated to number upwards of 400. Many were left out all night, and became the prey of prowling Turks and Arabs. Pte. Court was stripped of his boots and most of his clothes, and they kicked him shamefully, thinking he was dead. Later he crept slowly and painfully back to the British lines.

The 1/5th Somersets, reduced to a mere handful, were relieved next day and marched back to Latron and Ramleh. The remainder of the winter was spent in the neighbourhood of the latter place, and the Battalion occasionally held an outpost line to the east of Ludd.

Except for this outpost work the Battalion was not again actively engaged until the 9th of April, 1918. Then an attack was made on the village of Rafat, a small place near the Wadi Ballut, to the East of the Ludd-Tul Keram Railway. The Turks fought stubbornly, but the 1/5th Somersets carried the village and the ridge beyond. This was a position of strategic importance, and the enemy was not prepared to relinquish it without a struggle. On the 10th the ridge was heavily shelled, and many counter-attacks were launched against it. They all failed, and at the end of the day the Battalion still held the ridge, while its slopes were carpeted with enemy dead.

Throughout the summer of 1918 the 1/5th Battalion held outpost trenches in various sectors, and took part in numberless raids with the object of keeping the Turks on tenderhooks and preventing a return to slow and disastrous trench warfare.

The summer passed, and the beginning of September saw the preparations speeding up for the final attack which was to destroy the Turkish Armies utterly. In the coastal sector four divisions, including the 75th, were squeezed up on a narrow front.

At 4.30 a.m. on the 19th September the British guns began to shell the enemy outposts. The bombardment lasted only a quarter of an hour, and then the infantry attack began. Two companies of the 1/5th Battalion, under Major D. S. Watson, led the attack in the centre of the 234th Brigade. The enemy outposts were soon disposed of, and with the cavalry breaking through the enemy was soon flying in all directions, demoralised by the pursuit of the mounted troops.

The 75th Division pushed on and found itself opposed at El Tireh by the Reserves of the Turkish XXII. Corps. A stiff battle ensued, but in the meantime the 5th Cavalry Division had galloped along the coast creating havoc on the flank. The El Tireh position was captured about 11 a.m., and the 75th Division was left there in reserve.

There the Division remained until the Armistice. It was a trying time for the men to remain thus inactive, while great things

were happening. Such news as the capture of Nablus, Amman, the surrender of the Turkish II. Corps, the storming of Acre and Haifa, and the march on Damascus, only increased their desire to be in the thick of it. But after smashing the resistance of the enemy it was left to the Cavalry to finish the great work they had begun. The Armistice between the Allies and the Turks came into force at noon on October 31st, 1918.

After the Armistice of the 11th November had put an end to the world war the 1/5th Somersets moved back to the Suez Canal. Demobilisation had greatly reduced the strength of the Battalion when the Nationalist riots broke out in Egypt. Several British soldiers and civilians were assassinated, railway lines were torn up, and the native police were powerless. Men who were awaiting embarkation for home were ordered back to their regiments and were hurried to the more disturbed areas.

The 1/5th Battalion, now under the command of Lieut.-Colonel D. F. Urwick, D.S.O., was placed in charge of a construction train which was to repair the line between Cairo and Wasta. Leaving Cairo on the 28th March, 1919, the train arrived at Wasta on the 2nd April, after repairing the line in twenty-two places. Considerable trouble had been met with at the village of Shobak el Gaffara on 30th March. The train halted near the village owing to a break in the line, and a small party of men, unarmed, went over to the village to buy butter and eggs. They had scarcely reached the outskirts when they were fired on and the natives rushed on them with knives and sticks, wounding several. They got back to the train with difficulty. A platoon was ordered out, and the village was cleared, while the Omda and five ringleaders were arrested. The latter were shot at dawn on the 31st, and the Omda was taken to Wasta and handed over to the civil authorities.

Throughout April the Battalion garrisoned several of the disturbed towns. By the end of the month, however, the riots had subsided, and the 1/5th Somersets moved back to Cairo and from thence to Suez.

The Cadre of the Battalion sailed from Alexandria in the *Teutonic* at 8 a.m. on the 25th December. After calling at Malta and Gibraltar the Cadre landed at Plymouth at 1 p.m. on the 6th January, 1920, having spent more than five years overseas. The men entrained for Taunton at 7.30 p.m. and arrived at 10.36 p.m.

The following day they were welcomed home by the Mayor and Town Council.

\*       \*       \*       \*

The 2/5th Battalion was raised in September, 1914, and went overseas under the command of Lieut.-Colonel J. R. Paull, at the same time as the 2/4th, sailing on the 12th December, 1914. Unlike the 2/4th, however, it did not go to India, but went to Burma, arriving 1st January, 1915. The Headquarters of the Battalion was at Meiktila, while throughout its stay in Burma the Battalion had detachments at Rangoon, Shwebo, Bhamo, and Thayetmye. Garrison duties formed the chief employment of these detachments, and, except for a demonstration in force against the border tribes along the Chinese frontiers, entailing a march lasting three weeks, by Major W. H. Speke's Company, the history of the Battalion was uneventful.

The Burma Rugby Cup was won by the Regimental team in 1915, and in the early part of 1917 the Burma Polo Cup was won by a team of officers chosen from a single company.

In May, 1917, the 2/5th Battalion proceeded from Rangoon by sea to Calcutta. Battalion headquarters were at Dinapore, and, detachments were stationed at Barrackpore and Dum Dum, apparently they relieved the 2/4th Somersets at all three places. A continual sifting and re-sifting of the personnel of the Battalion set in about this time. "Several of the original officers had left the Battalion for duty on the staff, including the Adjutant, Captain C. H. Goodland, who remained in Burma as D.A.A.G., and others were transferred to the Indian Army. A large proportion of the men had been absorbed as Clerks in Army and Divisional Headquarters, in Ordnance Depots, and munition factories."\* Large drafts from England made up these casualties. The Battalion trained two machine gun sections, and sent them to Mesopotamia in 1917. In this same year it was employed in suppressing riots in the Arrah and Gaya districts around Dinapore. In 1918 the presence of the Barrackpore Detachment prevented some minor disturbances in Calcutta developing into serious riots.

In India the 2/5th Battalion upheld the reputation of the 1/5th Battalion by winning the Calcutta Cup in 1918 and 1919.

\* From the account written by Lieut.-Colonel J. R. Paull.

After the Armistice the Battalion Headquarters moved to Calcutta, and towards the end of 1919 the Cadre returned to England. The official date of the disbandment of the Battalion is 25th Feb., 1920.

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The story of the 3/5th Battalion is bound up in that of the 3/4th Battalion. Raised at the same time, they were amalgamated in 1916, and constituted the 4th (Reserve) Battalion Somerset L.I.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE TWO ARMY SERVICE CORPS COMPANIES.\*

THE 2nd South-Western Mounted Brigade Transport and Supply Column had completed its annual training for 1914, when its personnel were called up for war on August 4th. The strength of the Column at that time was two officers and 89 other ranks, and two officers and 24 other ranks were required to bring it up to establishment.

The history of the Column, as regards its early movements, is very similar to that of the West Somerset Yeomanry. As soon as the men were mobilized at Weston-super-Mare and Wedmore the Column, commanded by Captain Montgomerie Boyle, moved to Winchester, where the 2nd South-Western Mounted Brigade was assembling.

Whereas the Engineers may be termed the handymen of the Army, the men of the Army Service Corps are the Army's housewives. The Army Service Corps supplies the food for the troops, besides the forage for horses and other animals that may be used. The division, allocation and accounting for all these things are other branches of a Column's activities, and the clerks form a large proportion of the complement of the Army Service Corps.

These were the duties of the Transport and Supply Column while the 2nd South-Western Mounted Brigade was stationed on the East Coast (August, 1914, to September, 1915). The Column accompanied the Brigade to Suvla, where the rationing of the Brigade was carried out under difficult and dangerous conditions. Accommodated on the seashore, the Column was always within easy reach of the enemy's guns, and he seemed to make the ration dumps his special targets.

Like the West Somerset Yeomanry, the Transport and Supply men fell victims of that deadly scourge, dysentery. They

\* This Chapter is compiled from records in the possession of the Somerset T.A. Association, and a resume of the activities of the South-West Infantry Brigade, A.S.C., compiled by Major H. M. Gregory. There is no MS. or other records of the Transport and Supply Column, and we have had to rely on our own slight knowledge of the Column's services.

experienced, too, all the rigours of the great blizzard in November, 1915, though it affected them less than it did the Yeomanry, being accommodated in drier dug-outs.

After the evacuation of Suvla, the Column appears to have been detached from the 2nd South-Western Mounted Brigade, for most of the personnel spent the remainder of the war at Salonika. However, on the 1st September, 1916, the officers and men were transferred to the Regular Army, and the reorganised unit passes beyond our ken. The Transport and Supply Column was not revived after the war. Second and 3rd Lines were raised in 1915, but during the time they were Territorial Units they did not leave England.

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The South-Western Infantry Brigade Company, Army Service Corps, commanded by Major A. H. Peace, was in camp on Salisbury Plain on the memorable 4th August, 1914. It was the only Somerset unit, besides the West Somerset Yeomanry, that was up to full strength as regards other ranks ; only one officer was required to bring it up to its complete establishment.

The Company formed part of the Wessex Division, and remained with that formation until it sailed for India early in October, 1914, when it lost its connection with the South-Western Infantry Brigade. After the departure of the Division the Company remained on the Plain, the Supply Details being employed in the rationing of the troops encamped there, while the Transport Details provided vehicles and drivers for the units that were continually leaving and arriving on the Plain. Among the latter was the first Canadian Division which was sent over by our Great Dominion. Towards the end of 1914 the Company was attached to the 25th and 26th Divisions, and was stationed at Codford St. Mary.

On the 5th January, 1915, the Company was attached to the 29th Division, which was concentrated in and around Leamington. The men and horses of the Company were billeted in Kenilworth, and later at Hillmorton.

The 29th Division was a New Army Division, and was soon sufficiently trained to proceed on Active Service. It was, in fact, specially chosen to assist General Sir Ian Hamilton in his operations in the Dardanelles. The South-Western Infantry Brigade Company, A.S.C., embarked at Avonmouth on the 17th March, and sailed next day for Egypt. The Company disembarked at

Alexandria on the 31st March, and went into camp at Mex, some five miles from the ancient city of Alexander the Great. It was here that Sir Ian Hamilton had concentrated his expeditionary force, intended for the capture of the Gallipoli Peninsula, which, through no fault of the General, failed in so disastrous a fashion.

The expeditionary force arrived off Cape Helles on the night of the 24th-25th April, and the landing commenced at dawn. Part of the Company landed later in the day, and the remainder followed on the 26th. The Supply Details carried out their duties of rationing the 29th Division, and the remainder of the Company performed transport duties where transport could be little used. They remained on Gallipoli until the evacuation of the Cape Helles position, 8th-9th January, 1916, enduring with uncomplaining fortitude the great heat of the summer of 1915 and the extreme winter conditions of November that same year.

By the end of January the Company had reached Alexandria, and was in camp at Hadra. The 29th Division had been sent on to Suez, and there the Company joined it on the 2nd February. The Division was ordered to France on the 3rd March, and was accompanied by the Supply Details of the Company, the Transport Details and Headquarters remaining in Egypt. The unit appears to have been brought up to full establishment by means of drafts, and in April was allotted to the 53rd (Welsh) Division. Leaving Suez on the 5th June, the Company was encamped at Ismailia until March, 1917, with the force which protected the Canal. Some of the Supply Details were with the troops that fought in the Battle of Rumani (4th to 9th August, 1916). A portion of the Company was attached to a Mobile Column which operated in the Sinai Desert between the 9th and 21st October, the same year.

On the 1st September, 1916, however, the officers and men of the Company were transferred to the Regular Army, and thus they pass beyond the scope of this history of Somerset Territorial Units. As Regulars, however, they went into Palestine, taking part in the First and Second Battles of Gaza, the Capture of Beersheba and the Occupation of Jerusalem. Christmas Day, 1917, was spent in the Holy City. During the greater part of 1918 the Company was stationed in the malaria-haunted Jordan Valley, and worked incessantly and under trying conditions during the final overthrow of the Turkish forces. The Cadre of the Company returned to England in the beginning of August, 1919.

## CHAPTER IX.

**2ND SOUTH-WESTERN MOUNTED BRIGADE FIELD AMBULANCE, R.A.M.C.\***

THE Field Ambulance, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel A. Cary, was in camp at Fargo, Salisbury Plain, in the beginning of August, 1914. Its strength consisted of six officers and 107 other ranks, only six other ranks being required to bring it up to full establishment.

When war became imminent the Ambulance tried to return to Bath, but difficulties appeared on every hand. No transport could be begged, borrowed or otherwise acquired, and on marching to Amesbury, on the 3rd August, it was found that there were no trains available. Determined not to submit to these circumstances, the Ambulance set out to march to Bath. The night was spent at Shrewton, and next day it was possible to proceed the remainder of the way by train. That evening the order came to mobilise, and on the 5th August the Ambulance moved to Frome, its headquarters.

As soon as the unit had completed its establishment it joined the 2nd South-Western Mounted Brigade at Winchester, proceeding with it to the East Coast. The Ambulance was first billeted in Wivenhoe, and on June 1st, 1915, went into huts at Great Bentley. At these places the men were trained in what is surely one of the greatest of military duties, the healing of those broken in war. During this time Colonel Cary fell ill (August, 1915), and the command devolved upon Major R. Waterhouse.

The Ambulance accompanied the West Somerset Yeomanry to Gallipoli, sailing on the *Olympic* to Mudros, and from there to Suvla on the *Osmanieh*. The day after they landed on Suvla they

\* This Chapter is compiled from an article which appeared in the *Bath Herald*, 17th May, 1919, and details furnished to the Somerset T.A. Association by Lieut.-Colonel R. Waterhouse (1/2nd S.W. Mtd. Bde. F.A.), Lieut.-Colonel J. R. Benson (2/2nd S.W. Mtd. Bde. F.A.), and Lieut.-Colonel H. Norman Barnett (3/2nd S.W. Mtd. Bde. F.A.). The Official Record of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force has also been consulted.

raised their tents in an area set apart for them. The hospital tents were in full view of the enemy, but it is to the credit of the Turks that at Suvla, at any rate, they did not attempt to shell them.

There were soon a great many cases of dysentery to be dealt with, but the number of wounded was very small. During the great blizzard the doctors, orderlies and stretcher-bearers had to work day and night under most wretched conditions. The hospital camp was flooded, and the sick were attended to with difficulty. Those who were active enough were crowded twenty and more in a tent to give each other warmth, for there were no braziers and scarcely any fuel. The sick that lay on stretchers suffered most, for there were only hot drinks to keep them warm. Some, though not under the care of the Somerset men, were frozen to death.

The 2/2nd S.W. Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance was one of the first units to leave Suvla, being evacuated to Mudros on the night of the 11th-12th December. The unit had not come through its trying experience unscathed. Three officers fell ill, and through exposure and strain of work during the blizzard a large number of men also broke down.

On January 20th, 1916, the Field Ambulance left Mudros. Arriving at Alexandria on the 23rd, it rejoined the 2nd South-Western Mounted Brigade at Sidi Bishr. Here the Ambulance was increased in strength by drafts from the 3rd Line Field Ambulance at home and the return of those who had been in hospital.

The Ambulance accompanied the Brigade during its operations against the Senussi, and from the 20th April to the 1st December, 1916, was stationed at Qara. During these months they had a comparatively easy time. There was practically no fighting, and in spite of the great heat the percentage of sick was extremely low. In July Lieut.-Colonel A. Cary rejoined, and took over command.

The unit left Qara for Moascar Camp, Ismailia, on 1st December, moved to El Ferdan on the 8th January, 1917, and later to Kantara. During January Lieut.-Colonel Cary fell ill, and Major Waterhouse again assumed command.

When the West Somerset Yeomanry were reorganised as the 12th Battalion Somerset L.I., the 2nd S.W. Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance was amalgamated with the Welsh Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance, and became the 231st Field Ambulance, attached to the 74th (Yeomanry) Division. Lieut.-Colonel Hamilton, of the

Welsh Mounted Brigade F.A., was the senior officer, and took command of the amalgamated units.

While at Kantara the First Battle of Gaza (26th-28th March, 1917), took place. A large number of casualties was not expected, and the 231st Field Ambulance were surprised when they received a few hours' notice to help with the wounded. The men set to work with a will, however, and organised as a casualty clearing station, the Ambulance passed on to Cairo upwards of 2,000 cases.

Soon afterwards the 74th Division moved across the Sinai Peninsula into Palestine. The hospital tents were erected at Deir el Belah, and here for the first time the medical men experienced a little of the shadier side of war, for the Turks shelled the hospitals, though they were clearly marked and had the Red Cross flag flying. Two men of the 231st Field Ambulance were killed and there were many wounded.

The Second Battle of Gaza, with its long toll of casualties, gave the Ambulance ceaseless work for many days. But the stress and anxiety of dealing with large numbers of wounded soon died down, and for several months they had only to attend to the occasional casualties brought about by sickness and trench warfare.

In October, 1917, preparations were made for the capture of Beersheba. The three Field Ambulances of the 74th Division were reorganised; one tent section from each became an "immobile section," and were amalgamated under the command of Major Waterhouse. The day after the capture of Beersheba they took over a Turkish hospital in the town, and dealt with the casualties from the many Divisions operating on the Sheria-El Hereira front. They were later at Kuryet El Enab, and after the fall of Jerusalem formed a reception camp for the treatment of prisoners of war suffering from typhus fever. These "immobile" sections were far from immobile in their activities.

To return to the 231st Field Ambulance. On the day of the attack on Beersheba (31st October, 1917) the bearer section was close behind the 231st Brigade, and formed an advanced dressing station. During the Battle of Sheria (6th November) the main dressing station was at Abu Irgeig, and not only were the casualties in the 74th Division taken in, but also some from the 10th and 60th Divisions. There were not sufficient tents to accommodate them all, and upwards of 500 cases had to lie out in the open. To make

matters worse, the transport broke down, a common occurrence in that almost roadless country.

After Sheria the 74th Division moved back to rest, but by the end of the month it was on the move once more, this time to take part in the fighting around Jerusalem. The 231st Field Ambulance took over a portion of the Benedictine Monastery at Amwas.\* In this place of spiritual healing the medical men received and attended to the men who were wounded in the fighting around Nebi Samwil. The bearer section formed an advanced dressing station close behind the fighting troops. The number of cases were greatly reduced after the occupation of the Holy City, and in January, 1918, the Field Ambulance moved back to Latron.

A portion of the bearer section accompanied the force which captured Jericho, 21st February, 1918. On the 8th March the 74th Division began a series of operations to the North of Jerusalem. The Ambulance was at first concentrated near Ram Allah, but as the troops advanced it pushed forward, and on the 12th March was close to Selwad, on the Nablus-Jerusalem Road. On this day the "immobile" sections rejoined their respective Ambulances.

This marked the end of the Ambulance's activities in Palestine, for shortly afterwards the 74th Division was ordered to France. Leaving Selwad on 7th April, the Ambulance marched to Ludd, entraining for Kantara on the 10th. They embarked at Alexandria on the 29th, and arrived with the remainder of the Division at Marseilles on 7th May. After detraining at Noyelles, the Ambulance formed a brigade hospital at Marcheville. In June it moved to Lattre St. Quentin, near Arras, where the doctors and orderlies were kept busy with the first influenza epidemic. In the following month they went to Molingham, and established an advanced dressing station at St. Venant. Towards the end of August the Division went down to the Somme. Established at first at Ribemont, with an advanced dressing station at Cury, the Ambulance advanced as the British forced the enemy back. At Clery, Allames and then Driencourt, they raised their tents and gave comfort to the sick and

\* The article in the *Bath Herald* states that it was "The Benedictine Monastery of Kubibebeh (the Biblical Emmaus)." Amwas is the Biblical Emmaus, and is the more likely place for a Field Ambulance. The *Bath Herald* article says a little farther on "the unit moved back to Latron." If it were at Kubibebeh the correct expression would be "up to Latron." Amwas is "forward" of Latron taking the direction of the advance.

wounded. Their magnificent work was often carried out under hazardous circumstances, for the German Higher Command were not discriminative in their attentions. The hospitals were as subject to air raids as combatant troops. About the middle of September the Ambulance pushed on to Longavenes.

Throughout the advance the 231st Field Ambulance furnished all the advanced dressing stations for the 74th Division. The wounded were brought from the front line on wheeled stretchers to car-loading posts ; the ambulance cars carried them swiftly to the dressing stations ; after their wounds had been re-dressed the cases were hurried on to the casualty clearing stations, and from thence to the base hospitals.

On the 25th September the 74th Division was relieved and left the Somme. The great advance of the Division beyond Lille and Tournai has already been told, and during this time the Field Ambulance experienced the greatest difficulty in keeping up with the rapidly moving armies. A portion of the Ambulance was always kept in reserve in order to push on while the remainder were packing up. Often under shell-fire their list of casualties increased almost daily. They were established in a mill at Baisieux on the 30th October, when the Germans poured in shell after shell on them. Caught in a trap, they only escaped at the price of seven men killed and five wounded.

The Ambulance was continually on the march during November, and when the Armistice came into force it was at Ollignies, actually in front of the infantry ! After the Armistice they moved to Duisenal, and then to Grammont, where the Ambulance was reduced to Cadre strength. It returned to England about the end of May, 1919.

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The 2/2nd South-Western Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance was formed in Bath in 1914. It was commanded throughout its existence by Lieut.-Colonel J. R. Benson. Though used chiefly as a draft-finding unit, it was understood to be intended for service overseas, and the officers and men were bitterly disappointed when the years passed by and they were kept on the East Coast. It was exasperating to the doctors and men to have to confine their energies to the routine of camp life at home when there were untold wounded to be tended overseas. But some of them had their wish, though

not with their own unit ; and to take a soldier from the unit of his early experience is to take from him an integral part of his military life. But disappointment was inevitable in the exigencies of war.

The Second Line Field Ambulance was disbanded in 1917, and the officers and men were transferred to the Regular Army.

The 3/2nd South-Western Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance was raised and commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel H. Norman Barnett. Recruiting commenced in February, 1915, and the majority of the men came from Bath, while Weston-super-Mare and Frome supplied most of the remainder.

The unit was quickly up to establishment, and as soon as the men were sufficiently trained it volunteered for service overseas. The offer was not accepted, and it was utilised for draft finding purposes. After the draft was sent to the First Line in the beginning of 1916, part of the Field Ambulance was re-organised as a Royal Army Medical Corps Training Centre. Later it moved to Winchester, where the Centre was amalgamated with the 3/1st South-Western Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance, Colonel Barnett taking command of the combined Field Ambulance.

As in the case of the Second Line South-Western Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance, the combined unit was disbanded in 1917, and the officers and men were transferred to the Regular Army.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE VETERINARY UNITS.

WHEN the war commenced the Somerset Territorial Association raised two Veterinary Units, a Veterinary Hospital and a Mobile Veterinary Section. Both were very small in numbers.

We have endeavoured to obtain information about these units from several sources, but have failed. Enquiries were addressed to the War Office, but that Department was unable to furnish any information. It is hoped that this will meet the eyes of officers and men who served in the units, and that they will furnish us with particulars which will enable the history of the units to appear in another edition if its issue is warranted.

The Mobile Veterinary Section is believed to have served in France. The Hospital was stationed for many years, if not throughout the war, at Romsey. They did not last long as Territorial units, for about the year 1916 the officers and men were transferred to the Regular Army.

## CHAPTER XI.

## 11TH BN. SOMERSET LIGHT INFANTRY.\*

THE 11th Batt. Somerset L.I. was formerly the 85th Provisional Battalion. Known first as the "South-Western Brigade Battalion," the Provisional Battalion was raised at Yeovil in April, 1915. It consisted of home service and medically unfit men who were transferred from the 4th and 5th Battalions Somerset L.I., the 4th Battalion Dorset Regiment, and 4th Battalion Wiltshire Regiment. The first Commanding Officer was Colonel W. Helyar, late R. Warwickshire Regt.

The Battalion left Yeovil on the 29th April, 1915. After staying at Sandown, Isle of Wight, a few days, it moved on to Seaton Delaval on the 12th May. While at this place Colonel A. V. Kyrke succeeded Col. Helyar in the command of the Battalion. It was next stationed at Whitstable, proceeding there on 23rd March, 1916. At this place on the 1st January, 1917, the unit received the title by which it is best known, the "11th Batt. Somerset L.I." The 11th Somersets were sent to Herne Bay on 12th October, 1917, and to Wrentham on 12th March, 1918. They went over to France on the 6th May, the same year.

The Battalion at this time consisted of men who, on account of age or inferior physique, were classified in "B" Category (home service or garrison duty abroad). But they were "an extraordinarily staunch crowd for all that, with their hearts very much in the right place."† They were at first employed in digging trenches; which was work compatible with their physical ability, according to the doctors. But a man's spirit can defy the weakness of the flesh, and if his heart is "very much in the right place" he is but little inferior to the strong and healthy. The need for fighting men on the Western Front was so urgent that in August the 11th

\* This Chapter is compiled from Records in the possession of the Somerset Territorial Association, some notes supplied by Lieut.-Colonel Gillett, and a most informative letter written by Captain H. Hussey.

† Captain H. Hussey.

Battalion was called upon to man some front line trenches south of Arras. This work of A.I troops the 11th Somersets carried out as only men of spirit could.

Soon afterwards the Battalion was attached to the 177th Brigade of the 59th (North Midland) Division. Up to the time of the withdrawal of the enemy forces the 11th Somersets took their turn in the trenches East of St. Venant and Robecq. They then followed up the Germans through Calonne, Lestrem and La Gorque, taking over an outpost line in front of Laventie on the 19th September. Two days later they went back in reserve to Bout de Ville, and moved up to another outpost line near Fauquissart on the 27th. The 3rd October saw them marching through Fleurbaix to Bois Grenier to take over still more outpost duty. On the 6th the Battalion made a reconnaissance in force through a small wood near Petit Marais. It went back in reserve at Fleurbaix on the 11th.

This was their employment throughout the advance, alternating in outpost work and resting in reserve. Advancing by way of Wez Macquart, Lille—marching by night through the northern suburbs of the city—Willems and Ramegnies Chin, they reached the line of the Scheldt on the 22nd October. The same night they floated a raft and patrols succeeded in crossing the river.

On the night of the 25th-26th a most successful raid across the river was made by a small party of twelve other ranks under Sec.-Lieut. Jenkins. Crossing the river under the watchful eyes of the enemy was a delicate operation, but aided by the darkness they accomplished it and rushed an enemy outpost. Four men of the 7th Bavarian Imperial Regiment and a machine gun were captured. The Battalion was highly commended by the Brigade Commander in the following letter :—

“ R/14/320, dated 26/10/18.

“ The Brigadier wishes me to convey to you his congratulations on the very successful patrol enterprise carried out last night, which resulted in the capture of four prisoners and a machine gun. The identification obtained was most valuable.

“ He considers that the whole affair reflects great credit on the 11th Somerset L.I., and in particular on Sec.-Lieut. Jenkins and 12 other ranks who carried out the operation.

"He hopes that O.C. 11th Somerset L.I. will see his way to afford special indulgences while they are in reserve to all ranks who took part.

"(Sgd.) B. H. ROBERTSON, CAPTAIN,

"B.M. 177th Infantry Brigade."

As a special distinction the Corps Commander ordered that the Battalion should not in future be referred to as a "B" Category Unit. This was a unique honour, but they were men with A.I. spirits.

The Battalion moved back to Hulans in reserve on the day following this meritorious affair.

On the 30th the 11th Somersets again found outposts on the bank of the Scheldt, this time in front of Esquelmes. Two nights later (1st-2nd November) the Battalion succeeded in an operation of greater magnitude. A most successful raid was made by "A" Company under Captain R. H. Ridler. The raiding party had to "cross the canalised portion of the river which was wide, deep and fairly swift, and then attack a strong point."\* The strong point was the fortified village of Cabriolet Lietard. It was the most difficult task the Battalion had been set; but the men advanced under heavy shell and machine-gun fire with great determination. Well supplied with artillery support by the 296th Brigade R.F.A., they stormed the strong point, capturing another machine-gun and several prisoners. This was a creditable achievement for men graded as unfit for general service: the stretcher-bearers particularly distinguished themselves. Captain Ridler was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and several other ranks received other decorations. The Battalion was again highly commended by the Brigadier and Divisional Commander.

On the 5th November the Battalion was heavily engaged, endeavouring to secure a bridgehead over the Scheldt near Obigies. This they succeeded in doing towards evening. They marched back to Hulans for a much needed rest in reserve on the 7th, moving to Toufflers on the following day.

The Battalion was to have crossed the Scheldt on the 10th November, but while on the march they were ordered into billets at Pecq. Next day the Armistice put an end to their fighting.

\* Captain H. Hussey.

After the Armistice the Battalion was in billets at different times at Toufflers, Seclin, Noex-les-Mines, and Abancourt. At the last-named place the Battalion was presented with its King's Colour by Major-General Smythe, V.C. This banner now rests in St. Mary's Church, Taunton.

The unit was finally stationed at Les Attagues, near Calais. Its strength was greatly increased by drafts from the 1st, 6th and 7th Battalions Somerset L.I., and at one time it mustered upwards of 1,200 all ranks. Its employment at Les Attagues consisted almost entirely of guarding dumps, depots and prisons.

The Battalion was disbanded about the middle of 1919. During the greater part of its service in France it was commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Gillett.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE NATIONAL RESERVES.

THE value of the National Reserve on the outbreak of war cannot be over-emphasized. Consisting of ex-members of the Regular Army or the Territorial and Volunteer Forces, they were able to take their places in the ranks with serving troops, and with very little training were fit for service. Moreover, among the Reservists who had formerly been Territorials or Volunteers there were many tradesmen—skilled carpenters, masons, smiths, wheelwrights, and such like—who were invaluable when it became necessary to raise new technical units. When the 3rd Field Company Wessex Royal Engineers, with its Second and Third Lines, were raised, upwards of 250 National Reservists were transferred from the infantry units they were then serving in.

From the date of mobilization to the 10th November, 1914, the following Somerset National Reservists joined the Army :—

New Army .. .. .. .. ..	147
Special Reserve .. .. .. .. ..	521
Territorial Force .. .. .. .. ..	87
T.F. Supernumerary Companies .. .. .. .. ..	410
 Total .. .. .. .. ..	 1,165

The number shown as having joined the Territorial Force is not correct, and in the Association's half-yearly report it is said to have exceeded that number by, probably, 100. On the 1st May, 1915, the above total had increased to 2,203.

The Supernumerary Companies were complete units of National Reservists, which were added to the 3/4th and 3/5th Battalions Somerset L.I. In May, 1915, there were ten of these companies. They were employed in guarding railways and "Vulnerable Points."

Early in 1915 Colonel H. B. Patton, C.B., D.L., the Brigade Commandant of the Somerset National Reserve, died. His interest in the organisation and training of the National Reserves was very keen, and his loss to the county was greatly felt.

About the middle of 1916 the Territorial Supernumerary Companies were transferred to the Royal Defence Corps.

Although the National Reserve units, that is to say, the Supernumerary Companies, were employed on such uninspiring but nevertheless necessary and valuable work as guarding bridges, etc., the majority of the Somerset National Reservists saw active service in the units they joined or to which they were transferred.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE WAR VOLUNTEERS (1916-1919).

In 1915 there sprang up in Great Britain large bodies of men who desired to train themselves for the defence of the Kingdom in the event of invasion. They consisted chiefly of men who were too old for military service, and men who, on account of business and other ties, were unable to enlist in the Army, but still wished to make themselves militarily efficient. Formed into Volunteer Training Corps, they grew in numbers and influence during 1915 and 1916.

After much hesitation the Government recognised them about the middle of 1916, and under the Volunteer Act of 1863 formed them into a Volunteer Force. On December 22nd, 1916, a short Volunteer Act (6 & 7 Geo. V., chap. 62) was passed to give effect to the agreements of members to attend drills and perform military duty.

The Volunteer Training Corps raised in Somerset were given every possible encouragement by the County Territorial Association, who permitted them to have the free use of the Territorial Drill Halls throughout the county. As soon as their services were accepted, the Association was asked to take over the duty of administering them. They were first formed into two Battalions, the 1st and 2nd Battalions Somerset Volunteer Regiment. A Platoon of the 1st (University) Battalion Bristol Volunteer Regiment was also raised at Portishead with the consent of the Somerset Territorial Association. On the 1st September, 1916, Lieut.-Colonel T. Foster-Barham, V.D., was appointed County Commandant. At the same time he commanded the 1st Battalion. On the 31st December, 1917, Captain J. F. V. Agnew was appointed County Adjutant, but he carried out the duties from 27th September. Major H. Stonhouse-Gostling was first appointed Commanding Officer of the 2nd Battalion, but early in 1917 he was succeeded by Major A. H. Fortt. Lieut.-Colonel H. T. Daniel, T.D., took command of the 1st Battalion on the 17th August, 1917.

In 1916 the two Battalions were inspected by Field-Marshal Viscount French, G.C.B., O.M., G.C.V.O., K.C.M.G.

The strength of these Battalions on the 1st November, 1916, was :—

1st Battalion .. ..	19 Officers .. ..	1,210 Other Ranks.
2nd Battalion .. ..	20 " .. ..	1,088 "

As soon as the combined strength reached 2,400 a 3rd Battalion was formed under the command of Lieut.-Colonel A. L. Kelly. The county was then divided into recruiting areas. The recruiting area of the 1st Battalion embraced the Unions of Long Ashton, Axbridge, Bridgwater, Williton, and Dulverton ; that of the 2nd Battalion comprised the Unions of Bath, Keynsham, Clutton, and Frome ; while Wellington, Taunton, Chard, Langport, Yeovil, Wincanton, Shepton Mallet, and Wells Unions were assigned to the 3rd Battalion. The Headquarters of the 3rd Battalion were at Yeovil.

In 1917, a Motor Volunteer Corps was raised. Major J. W. Garton, formerly of the Wessex Divisional R.E., was appointed to command it, and with characteristic keenness he set to work to raise the six sections which comprised the Corps. Great difficulty was experienced in finding suitable men and vehicles for so large a unit. It was therefore reduced to two sections, which were raised in Bath. Major Garton retired owing to ill-health in 1918, and was succeeded in the command by Captain F. S. Ingle.

In 1918 the County Association was asked to raise a Volunteer Field Ambulance, consisting of 12 officers and 198 other ranks. Captain H. C. Bristowe, of Wrington, who had been an officer of the 1st Battalion since its inception, took command of the Ambulance. Its formation had not progressed far, however, when the war ended and recruiting was stopped.

Volunteers were classified in no less than six sections, A, B, C, D, P and R. Sections A, B and C consisted of Volunteers over, of, and under military age respectively. They had to be " free from serious organic disease, able to stand service conditions in garrisons at home, to march at least five miles, see to shoot with the aid of glasses, and to hear well." This approximated to the military category known as " C (i.)." They had to be free to vacate their civil employment on emergency, and agree to attend at least ten drills a month. In August, 1918, A and B Sections were each sub-divided into Training and Service Sections. Section " D " comprised men who did not

satisfy the physical qualification, or could not undertake the obligation to attend a specified number of drills. Section "D" Volunteers were regarded as supernumeraries. A certain number of Volunteers were allocated for police duty on an emergency arising, and these were placed in Section P. Volunteers who were employed directly by a Government Department, or were employed on war work under the Admiralty, War Office or Ministry of Munitions, or were railway employees, were assigned to Section R. They were all men who could not be dispensed with in their civil employments even in the event of invasion.

The relation of the Somerset Territorial Association to the Volunteer Force was exactly the same as its correlation to the Territorial Force. The training of the Force was in the hands of the military authorities, but the recommendation of gentlemen for commissions, the provision of accommodation for drill purposes, clothing, rifle ranges, and the travelling, recruiting, and general administration of the Volunteers were the duties of the Association. These duties presented many difficulties for the Government Grant of £2 per Volunteer passed as efficient was scarcely enough to provide uniforms for efficient and non-efficients, who had also to be clothed. From the 1st April to the 30th September, 1918, the expenditure on the Somerset Volunteers was £3,133 3s. 8d. The grants received from the War Office during the same period amounted to £968.

When the Somerset Volunteer Training Corps were organised into two infantry Battalions in 1916, 70 per cent. of the men possessed uniforms of a drab mixture serge. The men without uniform were issued with red armlets bearing the letters "G.R." They were worn on the left arm above the elbow, and were issued by the War Office. Early in 1917 an armlet of drab mixture serge, with a crown and "G.R." in red was substituted. The cap badge was the Royal Arms.

In 1918 the Volunteers were permitted to adopt the titles and badges of their kindred Territorial units. The infantry battalions therefore became the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Volunteer Battalions Prince Albert's (Somerset L.I.), and the Motor Volunteer Corps was renamed the Somerset A.S.C. Mechanical Transport (Vols.).

The Tribunals set up under the Military Service Act, 1916, imposed service in the Volunteer Force as one of the conditions of exemption from Military Service. It did not release a man from his liability for service in the Regular Army or Territorial Force,

and at no time could service in the Volunteer Force form the basis of an appeal for exemption. Although it greatly increased the strength of the Volunteer Force, this forcing of men to join had the counter effect of reducing its morale. The keenness of the pure Volunteer began to deteriorate. Towards the end the Force lacked, though not entirely, the matchless, exultant spirit which was manifest in its early existence.

A Volunteer Special Service Company was raised among the three Battalions in 1918 to do three months' duty on the East Coast. The three months' service ended on the 28th September. Throughout that period the wives and dependants of the men were paid separation allowances through the Association's Separation Allowances Department.

When the war ended the Volunteer Units were distributed as follows :—

**1ST VOL. BATT. PRINCE ALBERT'S (SOMERSET L.I.).**

Headquarters : 60, Clare Street, Bridgwater.

<i>Companies.</i>	<i>Headquarters.</i>	<i>Detachments.</i>
" A " ..	Weston-super-Mare ..	Clevedon and Yatton.
" B " ..	Langford ..	Blagdon, Wrington, Cheddar, Congresbury, and Winscombe.
" C " ..	Williton ..	Watchet and Minehead.
" D " ..	Bridgwater ..	Highbridge, Burnham and Wedmore.

**2ND VOL. BATT. PRINCE ALBERT'S (SOMERSET L.I.).**

Headquarters : Drill Hall, Lower Bristol Road, Bath.

<i>Companies.</i>	<i>Headquarters.</i>	<i>Detachments.</i>
" A " ..	Bath ..	Nil.
" B " ..	Bath ..	"
" C " ..	Keynsham ..	Radstock, Peasedown and Camerton.
" D " ..	Frome ..	Midsomer Norton and Paulton.

**3RD VOL. BATT. PRINCE ALBERT'S (SOMERSET L.I.).**

Headquarters : Drill Hall, Yeovil.

<i>Companies.</i>	<i>Headquarters.</i>	<i>Detachments.</i>
" A " ..	Oakhill ..	Wells, Shepton Mallet, Glastonbury, Crocombe, and Street.
" B " ..	Crewkerne ..	Chard and Ilminster.
" C " ..	Taunton ..	Wellington and Wiveliscombe.
" D " ..	Yeovil ..	Ilchester, Somerton and Langport.

**SOMERSET ARMY SERVICE CORPS M.T. (VOLS.).**

Headquarters : Bath.

**SOMERSET R.A.M.C. (VOLS.).**

Headquarters : Churchill Road, Weston-super-Mare.

The Military Service Act, 1918, which raised the age limit for military service, had the effect of reducing the strength of the Volunteer Units. So greatly was it felt in Somerset that when the Armistice was signed the amalgamation of one of the infantry battalions with the other two was under consideration.

The future of the Volunteer Force came under consideration as soon as the war ended. The War Office hoped to be able to retain it in a modified form as a Defence Force behind the Territorial Force. This was not to be. The great need for economy in the expenditure of public money made the scheme impossible. But so reluctant were the Government to dispense with it that it was not until March, 1920, that the Infantry Battalions were disbanded. The Somerset A.S.C. M.T. (Vols.) were not disbanded until the middle of 1921, and was not confirmed until Army Order No. 290 of 1923 was published.

## PART V. (POST-WAR).

### CHAPTER I.

#### POST-WAR REORGANISATION.

**W**HEN the Somerset Territorial Units, represented by their Cadres, returned from the war it was hoped that all the pre-war units would be revived. But the Great War, as is the case with all wars, taught the Military Authorities many things. One of the chief lessons of the war was the paramount value of artillery and the decreasing utility of cavalry under modern war conditions.

The War Office decided, therefore, that the two Somerset Yeomanry Regiments should be converted into a Brigade of Royal Field Artillery. The Yeomanry Regiments did not really exist, except "on paper," so that conversion was not possible. What actually happened was, the Yeomanry Regiments were disbanded and a Brigade of Field Artillery raised in their place. This was modified in 1921, when the Army Council decided to reconstitute the North Somerset Yeomanry. The two Batteries of Artillery, formed at Bath and Shepton Mallet, were disbanded in consequence. The Brigade of Artillery was completed by the formation of two Batteries in Dorset.

The Somerset Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, was another unit which was not revived. In its place the County Association was asked to form a Battery of Royal Garrison Artillery. This latter unit was allotted to Clevedon and Portishead, but it proved abortive owing to the Association's inability to secure the services of a suitable officer to command it.

The Wessex Royal Engineers were reformed. They at first consisted of Headquarters, Wessex Divisional Royal Engineers and two Battalions. This formation was only an experiment, however, and the two Battalions are now (6th July, 1923) organised into a Field Park Company and three Field Companies. The 3rd Field Company is in Hampshire.

The 4th and 5th Battalions Somerset L.I. were resuscitated, but the four company system on which they are now organised has the effect of concentrating them in fewer towns.

The South-Western Infantry Brigade Army Service Corps was revived as the 3rd Wessex Company, R.A.S.C., with headquarters at Bridgwater. Its life was short, for in 1922 Territorial expenditure had to be reduced, and the Company was disbanded. The South-Western Mounted Brigade Transport and Supply Column was not revived.

A Wessex Mobile Veterinary Section, Royal Army Veterinary Corps, was formed at Minehead. In 1921 the Veterinary Headquarters, Wessex Division, were allotted to Somerset, but the Headquarters are at Bideford, in Devon.

In 1921 the Somerset County Association was also asked to raise the 4th Southern General Hospital. The Hospital was allotted to Bath, and Lieut.-Colonel R. Waterhouse was appointed to command it. Recruiting had scarcely begun, however, when the need for economy brought about the disbandment of the unit. On the outbreak of war the Hospital would probably be raised in Somerset, and in order to staff it the Association is required to register a Territorial Army Nursing Service, consisting of 114 Matrons, Sisters and Nurses.

A Signal Section, Royal Corps of Signals, was allotted to Somerset. Lieut. W. Edwards was appointed to command it, but no men have been enlisted.

Appendix II. gives a complete list of Somerset Territorial Units as they exist to-day, and shows their complete official titles, their establishment, headquarters, squadron, and company headquarters and out-stations.

The short Territorial Army and Militia Act, 1921 (11 and 12 Geo. V., Ch. 37) recognised in a most effective manner the great services of the Territorial Force during the War of 1914-1919. It was raised to the dignity of an Army.

The Territorial Army no longer offers drill and an annual camp as its chief attractions. A Territorial can earn an annual bounty by attending a certain number of drills in a year, firing his annual course of musketry and attending camp. Inter-regimental competitions are organised under the Territorial Army Sports Board. The

County Association arrange each year an Inter-Squadron, Battery and Company Miniature Rifle Shooting Competition. Social amenities are catered for, and by expenditure of more than £1,000 the County Association have fitted up recreation rooms and buffets at all their drill halls.

In 1923 Major F. M. E. Kennedy, C.B., resigned his appointment of Secretary to the County Association. Possessed of considerable tact and ability, he conducted the affairs of the Association during the most critical years of its existence, and nothing gave him greater pleasure than to be told a few months before he resigned, by the Secretary of another Association, that he (the latter) "always liked to know what Somerset was doing for he regarded it as the best-conducted Association in the country."

Lieut.-Colonel C. D. G. Lyon, D.S.O., was appointed Secretary of the Association, and commenced his duties on the 1st September, 1923.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE CADET FORCE.

THE Cadet Force has a much earlier origin than most people think. So popular did the Volunteer Force become after its formation in 1859 that the desire for military training spread to many of the great public schools. Cadet Corps were formed, and affiliated to local Volunteer Units. Workers among boys in our big cities realised the value of a military organisation as an aid to their great endeavours, and in 1883 the Boys' Brigade was founded in Glasgow by Mr. (afterwards Sir) W. A. Smith. Two years later Mr. H. W. Nevinson, another worker amongst boys, formed a Cadet Company of working boys in Whitechapel. This was the original of the many Cadet Corps that exist to-day unassociated with any religious body. The great success of the Boys' Brigade led to the formation of the Church Lads' Brigade (1891), the Jewish Lads' Brigade (1895), the Catholic Lads' Brigade (1896), and many others.

The first Cadet Units raised in Somerset were probably inspired by the South African War. In March, 1900, a Cadet Corps was organised at Bath College and affiliated to the 1st Vol. Batt. Somerset L.I. In May, the same year, another Corps was raised at King Edward's School, Bath. A third Corps was formed at Wellington County School in October, 1901, which was affiliated to the 2nd Vol. Batt. Somerset L.I.

With the introduction of the Territorial Force in 1908 a change in the organisation of the Cadet Force became inevitable. But it was not until the 21st May, 1910, that a Special Army Order was issued outlining the conditions under which Cadet Units could be raised and "recognised." The Public School Cadet Units became Officers' Training Corps, Junior Division, and the Cadet Force was confined to Cadet Corps not associated with schools or religious bodies. Later, the various Lads' Brigades were invited to apply for recognition as Cadets and receive Government assistance to the extent of £5 per Cadet Company of 30 Cadets per annum.

On the 15th August, 1912, the Somerset Territorial Association granted recognition to two Battalions of Church Lads' Brigade, which had their headquarters at Taunton and Wells. They received respectively the titles of 1st and 2nd Bath and Wells Cadet Battalions Church Lads' Brigade. They were the first Cadet Corps recognised under the new regulations. Another C.L.B. Battalion was recognised the following year, but the Cadet Movement did not progress in Somerset until the war inspired people of all ages with martial ardour.

So many schools then wished to form Officers' Training Corps that after a few months the Army Council would not accept any more. The schools could, however, form Cadet Corps to be recognised by Territorial Associations. The first of these School Cadet Units to be raised in Somerset was the Queen's College (Taunton) Cadet Battalion, which was accepted by the County Territorial Association on the 7th May, 1915. The next Cadet Corps to be raised was the Wedmore Cadet Corps, which was recognised on the 31st July, 1915. Commanded by Cadet Captain W. G. Burrough, it was the first Somerset Cadet unit organised outside a school and not connected with any religious body. It was composed of village boys more or less employed on the farms. After a few years boys from the local Secondary School were enrolled, and the unit is now known as the "Sexey's School (Blackford) Cadet Corps."

Other School Cadet Units were formed at the Grammar School, Ilminster; Clarence School, Weston-super-Mare; Lewisham School, Weston-super-Mare; Grammar School, Shepton Mallet; Crewkerne School, and Wells Boys' Blue School. The War Volunteers raised Cadet Units at Shepton Mallet, Bridgwater, and Minehead. After the war Cadet Corps were organised at Wrington, and the Chard School, Chard.

On the 7th November, 1917, the County Association granted recognition to the 1st Wessex Cadet Battalion, the Boys' Brigade. This Battalion consisted of eight Companies stationed at Yeovil, Stoke-under-Ham, Castle Cary, Milborne Port, and Bridgwater. At one time its strength exceeded 400 Cadets.

These Cadet Units did a great deal of valuable work during the war. They taught elementary military drill so that when the Cadets attained military age they were acquainted with drill and the use of the rifle. Their knowledge and alertness gained for them speedy promotion.

In addition the Cadets did much useful work in other directions. The 4th Bath and Wells Cadet Battalion Church Lads' Brigade provided sections of lads in Bath to help the police under any circumstances, day or night. They helped the police find billets for the troops, and when the alarm was given of the approach of enemy aircraft, they were commended by the Chief Constable of Bath for the prompt manner in which they carried out the various duties assigned to them. A large number of the Cadets of Queen's College, Taunton, spent their summer holidays of 1917 and 1918 at a Harvest Camp at Newent, Gloucestershire. They made their own camp arrangements, and Cadet Captain H. J. Channon, their Commanding Officer, acted as Camp Quartermaster. During the 1918 camp the Cadets worked on an average eleven hours a day. The Cadets of Ilminster Grammar School provided squads of stretcher-bearers for the transport of sick and wounded at the two Voluntary Aid Detachment Hospital near Ilminster. Orderlies and messengers for the hospitals were also provided, while other Cadets assisted local farmers with their harvests and private residents with their gardens and allotments. The Corps' War Saving Association raised over £300. The 1st Wessex Cadet Battalion the Boys' Brigade had special duties assigned to it in the event of air raids ; it provided guides for the ambulances taking sick and wounded to the Norton-sub-Hamdon V.A.D. Hospital ; and the Cadets contributed large sums to War Charities by collecting and selling waste paper and old metal. In the early days of the war, before it became a Cadet Unit, two of the companies provided, at the request of the police, day and night guards at bridges and waterworks in their neighbourhood. Cadet Captains J. C. Macnutt, Clarence School, Weston-super-Mar, and H. J. Channon, Queen's College, Taunton, were brought to the notice of the Secretary of State for War for the high state of efficiency to which they had trained their respective Corps.

One of the most remarkable Cadet Units ever raised was recognised by the Somerset Territorial Association at the special request of the War Office, on the 10th July, 1916. It was named the Severn Cadet Corps, and consisted of 115 boy employees of the Asiatic Petroleum Company. The only officer of the Corps received a commission in the Army Service Corps. The Cadet Corps was sent to France, and with their headquarters at Rouen the Cadets were employed as working parties in connection with their trades. They were clothed and equipped by the War Office. In 1917 the War

Office decided that the Cadets classified in Category "A," and who were over eighteen years of age, should be released for service in fighting units. Other boys were enrolled in England to take their places in the Cadet Corps. The Severn Cadet Corps was the only Territorial Cadet Unit which served overseas. When the war ended it was disbanded.

With the termination of the war it was thought by many that the need for Cadet Corps would cease. In many counties a large number of Cadet Units were disbanded almost immediately. A conference of Somerset Cadet Officers, the first of its kind, was held at the County Territorial Hall, Taunton, on the 15th February, 1919. The future of the Cadet Movement was discussed, and it was the unanimous opinion of those present that the movement should enter upon a new phase with the physical and moral development of the youth as its primary objects. It was decided to form a County Cadet Committee, and to organise Inter-Cadet Corps Competitions for Cricket, Football, Swimming, and Miniature Rifle Shooting. For the conduct of these Competitions a Competition Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Cadet Major L. H. Mermagen, 1st Cadet Corps, 5th Batt. Somerset L.I.

The County Cadet Committee held its first meeting on the 17th May, 1919, when Major F. M. E. Kennedy, C.B., was appointed Chairman, and Mr. W. G. Fisher, Honorary Secretary. On the 8th July, 1919, Lieut.-Colonel W. Marwood-Elton was appointed Colonel Commandant of Cadets for the County of Somerset, and was elected Chairman of the County Cadet Committee, Major Kennedy becoming President. Mr. Fisher was appointed Cadet Captain and Staff Officer of Cadets for the County on the 23rd September.

The County Cadet Committee, representative as it is of all the Cadet Units in the County, has more than justified its formation. Three big inspections of Somerset Cadets have been held in Taunton, the inspecting officers being Lieut.-General Sir Charles L. Woolcombe, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., the War Office Inspector of Cadets (twice), and Major-General Sir Louis Bols, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., D.S.O., the General Officer Commanding 43rd (The Wessex) Division. The Lucas-Tooth Competitions for deciding the most efficient School and Non-School Cadet Units have been held every year, the majority of the inspections being carried out by Colonel Marwood-Elton. In addition, courses of instruction in physical training have been held at Taunton and Yeovil, which

have resulted in the diffusion of valuable knowledge of this important subject.

The County Cadet Committee infused a new spirit into the Cadet Movement in Somerset. It has been the means of bringing together the Cadet Officers of the School Corps and the Cadet Officers who work among the working boys of our towns, and the meetings have become gatherings of friends animated with one desire. On more than one occasion the Committee have been able to advise the County Association and War Office on matters connected with the Cadet Movement.

The Somerset Cadets have taken part in several National Cadet Competitions, the chief one being the Miniature Rifle Shooting Competition for the King's Shield. In this Competition the Cadets at Lewisham School, Weston-super-Mare, have done remarkably well. Entering first in 1920 the team was sixth out of 39 competing teams. In the following year the team was fourth, and in 1922 it was second, winning the Bronze Badges with a score of 937, only three points less than that of the winning team. The Badges were to have been presented, on behalf of His Majesty the King, by General The Earl of Cavan, K.P., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., K.C.B., the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, at the Drill Hall, Lower Bristol Road, Bath, on 8th November, 1922. But Lord Cavan was summoned to an urgent meeting of the Cabinet, and the Badges were presented by Major-General the Hon. J. F. Garthorne Hardy, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., Director of Military Training at the War Office.

The Inter-Cadet Corps Competitions have been contested with a very fine spirit of rivalry, but owing to the cost of travelling only the richer units have been able to take part. The Challenge Cups and Aggregate Shield were purchased out of donations of £25 each from the Somerset Territorial Association and the Somerset Voluntary Help Association, a war-time body organised for the purpose of sending comforts to Somerset Units on Active Service.

The Swimming Competition is held annually at the Knightstone Baths, the arrangements being made by Cadet Captain L. C. Comfort. The Miniature Rifle Shooting Competition was, until 1923, organised on the same lines as the King's Shield Competition, and for the last three years has been won by the Cadets at Lewisham School. In 1923 a similar competition was organised among Somerset Territorial Companies, etc., and the best Cadet team will compete

with the best Territorial team every year for medals presented by the Somerset Territorial Association.

On the occasion of the visit of H.R.H. The Duke of York to Taunton on 20th June, 1922, the Queen's College (Taunton) Cadet Battalion, the Cadet Corps at Ilminster Grammar School, and the Chard School Cadet Corps, assisted the military authorities in lining the streets of the town.

In December, 1922, the Cadet Movement received a severe setback. The annual Government grant of 5/- per efficient Cadet, and all the privileges which the Cadet Force had hitherto enjoyed, were withdrawn. The Officers' Training Corps, founded in schools which could afford to meet their expenses, were not dispossessed of their much higher Government grants. The Cadets, however, could have dispensed with the annual grants if the free issue of camp equipment could have been continued. The withdrawal of this concession has the result of depriving thousands of working boys from our great towns and cities of the chance of spending each year a week of healthy open-air life under canvas.

The policy of the Cadet Force varies more or less in every county. During the war the object was purely military, but in Somerset physical and moral development have now become first principles. Military drill is a secondary matter, and is used only as a means to the attainment of the primary objects.

The Cadet Units existing in Somerset to-day (16th July, 1923) are :—

	<i>Recognised.</i>
4th Bath and Wells Cadet Batt. C.L.B., K.R.R.C. . .	20th March, 1913.
Queen's College (Taunton) Cadet Batt. . . . .	7th May, 1915.
Sexey's School (Blackford) Cadet Corps . . . . .	31st July, 1915.
1st Cadet Corps, 5th Batt. Som. L.I. (The Grammar School, Ilminster) . . . . .	18th Feb., 1916.
2nd Cadet Corps, 4th Batt. Som. L.I. . . . .	11th July, 1917.
1st Wessex Cadet Batt. The Boys' Brigade . . . . .	7th Nov., 1917.
Crewkerne School Cadet Corps . . . . .	14th March, 1918.
Wells Boys' Blue School Cadet Company . . . . .	1st June, 1918.
2nd Cadet Corps, 5th Batt. Som. L.I. (Bridgwater) . . .	10th June, 1918.
3rd Cadet Corps, 5th Batt. Som. L.I. (Minehead) . . .	14th August, 1918. (Suspended.)
The Chard School Cadet Company . . . . .	1st March, 1922.

A Cadet Corps at the County School, Yeovil, is about to be formed.

## APPENDIX I.

## LIST OF TERRITORIAL COMMANDING OFFICERS.

## NORTH SOMERSET YEOMANRY.

Period.	Rank and Name.	Appointed.	Ceased to Command.
1st April, 1908, to 3rd Aug., 1914	Lt.-Col. W. M. Sherston, D.S.O.	1-4-08	8-1-09
3rd Aug., 1914	Lt.-Col. G. A. Gibbs T.D., M.P.	9-1-09	9-3-14
	Lt.-Col. G. C. Glyn, D.S.O. ...	10-3-14	3-8-14
<b>1 / 1ST NORTH SOMERSET YEOMANRY.</b>			
3rd Aug., 1914, to 15th Feb., 1920	Lt.-Col. G. C. Glyn, D.S.O. ...	4-8-14	13-5-15
	Capt. R. Houston (Royal Dragoons) ... ..	13-5-15	17-6-15
	Lt.-Col. M. R. C. Backhouse, D.S.O. (Northd. Yeo., att.)	18-6-15	20-12-16
	Lt.-Col. G. H. A. Ing, D.S.O. (Major 2nd D.G.) ..	21-3-17	
<b>2 / 1ST NORTH SOMERSET YEOMANRY.</b>			
	Lt.-Col. G. A. Gibbs (Lt.-Col. ret. T.F.) .. ..	14-10-14	
	Lt.-Col. E. B. Sheppard ..	15-4-17	
	Major A. L. Langman, C.M.G.		
	Lt.-Col. G. R. Powell (Major, Welsh Horse Yeo.) ..	20-2-18	
<b>3 / 1ST NORTH SOMERSET YEOMANRY.</b>			
	Major A. H. Gibbs .. ..		
1st Jan., 1922*	Lt.-Col. H. G. Spencer, T.D... Lt.-Col. G. H. A. Ing, C.M.G., D.S.O. ... ..	26-10-21 23-3-23	22-3-23

## WEST SOMERSET YEOMANRY.

Period.	Rank and Name.	Appointed.	Ceased to Command.
1st April, 1908, to 3rd Aug., 1914.	Lt.-Col. and Hon. Col. W. Barrett, T.D. ... ..	1-4-08	7-11-11
	Lt.-Col. R. Marriott-Dodington	8-11-11	3-8-14
4th Aug., 1914, to 3rd Jan., 1917.	Lt.-Col. R. Marriott-Dodington, T.D... ... ..	4-8-14	14-10-14
	Lt.-Col. F. N. Q. Shuldharn, T.D. ... .. ..	15-10-14	3-1-17

\* Official date of reconstitution of N.S.Y. is 1st January, 1922.

## 12TH (W.S.Y.) BATT. SOMERSET L.I.

Period.	Rank and Name.	Appointed.	Ceased to Command.
4th Jan., 1917, to 1919.	Lt.-Col. F. N. Q. Shuldhham, T.D. .. .. 4-1-17	16-10-17	
	Lt.-Col. G. S. Poole, D.S.O. .. 17-10-17	12-17	
	Lt.-Col. C. R. Hayward, D.S.O. 12-17	9-18	
	Lt.-Col. G. S. Poole, D.S.O. .. 9-18		

## 2/1ST WEST SOMERSET YEOMANRY.

Lt.-Col. R. Marriott-Dodington, T.D. .. .. 15-10-14		
Lt.-Col. V. D. Stenhouse, T.D. 15-4-17		1919

## 3/1ST WEST SOMERSET YEOMANRY.

Capt. E. F. Browning .. .. 5-5-15	1916
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## SOMERSET BATTERY ROYAL HORSE ARTILLERY.

Period.	Rank and Name.	Appointed.	Ceased to Command.
1st April, 1908, to 3rd Aug., 1914.	Major C. B. St. John Mildmay, Hon. Major 4th Batt. Som. L.I. (M.). Capt. ret. pay .. 1-4-08	30-4-11	
	Major E. R. Phillips, Capt. ret. pay (Res. of Off.) .. .. 1-5-11	9-12-13	
	Major F. Aikenhead, Major ret. pay (Res. of Off.) .. .. 10-12-13	3-8-14	

## 1/1ST SOMERSET R.H.A.

4th Aug., 1914, to	Major F. Aikenhead .. .. 4-8-14	15-5-16
	Capt. M. Clowes .. .. 15-5-16	15-11-17
	Capt. H. S. White .. .. 16-11-17	22-11-17
	Capt. M. Clowes .. .. 23-11-17	28-11-17
	Capt. H. S. White .. .. 29-11-17	28-12-17
	Capt. M. Clowes, M.C. .. .. 29-12-17	16-1-18
	Capt. H. S. White, M.C. .. .. 17-1-18	3-4-18
	Capt. M. Clowes .. .. 4-4-18	

## 2/1ST SOMERSET R.H.A.

Capt. W. H. Bailey .. .. 27-11-14
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In March, 1917, all R.A. (T.A.) officers were placed on one seniority list in Army List.

The Battery was merged into the 94th (Dorset and Somerset Yeomanry, then 1st Somerset) Bde. R.F.A.

## APPENDIX I.

## 1ST SOMERSET BRIGADE ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY.

Period.	Rank and Name.	Appointed.	Cess'd to Command.
	Brigade Commander : Major and Bt. Lt.-Col. C. D. G. Lyon, D.S.O., R.F.A. (Temp. Lt.-Col. T.A.) ..	17-4-20	30-9-23
	Lt.-Col. F. L. C. Livingstone- Learmonth, C.M.G. ..	1-9-23	
1ST (WEST) SOMERSET BATTERY ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY.	Major H. S. White, M.C. ..	5-6-20	28-10-21
2ND (WEST) SOMERSET BATTERY ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY.	Major S. H. B. Blandy ..	4-6-20	11-8-21
	Major E. C. B. Elliott ..	12-8-21	28-10-21
3RD (NORTH) SOMERSET BATTERY ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY.	Major J. A. Garton, M.C. ..	17-6-20	28-10-21
4TH (NORTH) SOMERSET BATTERY ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY.	Major C. C. Robertson, D.S.O., (Lt.-Col. Res. of Off.) ..	30-6-20	28-6-21
	Major C. Hunter ..	29-6-21	28-10-21

## 94TH (SOMERSET YEOMANRY) BRIGADE ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY.

Brigade Commander : Major and Bt.-Lt.-Col. C. D. G. Lyon, D.S.O., R.F.A. (Temp. Lt.-Col. T.A.) ..	29-10-21	Sept., 1922
373RD (WEST) SOMERSET BATTERY ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY.	Major H. S. White, M.C. ..	29-10-21 Sept., 1922
374TH (WEST) SOMERSET BATTERY ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY.	Major E. C. B. Elliott ..	29-10-21 Sept., 1922
375TH (NORTH) SOMERSET BATTERY ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY.	Major J. A. Garton, M.C. ..	29-10-21 31-3-22
376TH (NORTH) SOMERSET BATTERY ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY.	Major C. Hunter ..	29-10-21 31-3-22

## 94TH (DORSET AND SOMERSET YEOMANRY) BRIGADE ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY (LESS TWO BATTERIES RAISED IN DORSET).

Brigade Commander : Major and Bt.-Lt.-Col. C. D. G. Lyon, D.S.O., R.F.A. (Temp. Lt.-Col. T.A.) ..	Sept., 1922
373RD (WEST SOMERSET YEOMANRY) BATTERY ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY.	Major H. S. White, M.C. ..
	Sept., 1922
374TH (WEST SOMERSET YEOMANRY) BATTERY ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY.	Major E. C. B. Elliott ..
	Sept., 1922

**HEADQUARTERS, 43RD (THE WESSEX) DIVISIONAL ENGINEERS.  
[COMMANDING ROYAL ENGINEER, 43RD (THE WESSEX) DIV.]**

Period.	Rank and Name.	Appointed.	Ceased to Command.
1st April, 1908, to 3rd Aug., 1914.	Lt.-Col. S. Keen, T.D.	.. 1-4-08	3-4-14
4th Aug., 1914, to 15th Feb., 1920.	Lt.-Col. S. Keen, T.D. ..	.. 4-8-14 .. 14-7-16	13-7-16
<b>1ST LINE.</b>			
4th Aug., 1914, to 15th Feb., 1920.	Lt.-Col. J. F. Keen	..	13-12-14

**2ND LINE.**

Lt.-Col. J. F. Keen .. 13-12-14

Lt.-Col. J. F. Keen commanded the Divisional Engineers Training or Reserve Unit up to its disbandment.

During its existence this training unit held various designations. Dates are not known.

Post-war. Lt.-Col. R. B. Dutton, D.S.O., T.D. ... 24-2-20

**1ST WESSEX FIELD COMPANY ROYAL ENGINEERS.  
[NOW 204TH (WESSEX) FIELD COMPANY ROYAL ENGINEERS.]**

Period.	Rank and Name.	Appointed.	Ceased to Command.
1st April, 1908, to 3rd Aug., 1914.	Major H. P. Lyle	.. 11-12-08	15-1-13
3rd Aug., 1914.	Major R. B. Dutton	.. 16-1-13	3-8-14

**1 / 1ST WESSEX FIELD CO. R.E.**

3rd Aug., 1914, to 15th Feb., 1920. Major R. B. Dutton .. 4-8-14

**2 / 1ST WESSEX FIELD CO. R.E.\***

Major C. Bamford .. 5-10-14

**3 / 1ST WESSEX FIELD CO. R.E.\***

Lieut. G. Moon .. ..

**1ST BATT. 43RD (WESSEX) DIVL. ENGINEERS.**

Post-war. Lt.-Col. R. B. Pitt, M.C. ... Feb., 1920 Oct., 1921†

\* Senior officers in their line.

†At this time the Divisional Engineers became the unit. The designation of the 1st Batt. Wessex R.E. was changed to "No. 1 Double Field Co. Wessex R.E." in December, 1920.

## APPENDIX I.

**2ND WESSEX FIELD COMPANY ROYAL ENGINEERS.  
[NOW 205TH (WESSEX) FIELD COMPANY, ROYAL ENGINEERS.]**

Period.	Rank and Name.	Appointed.	Ceased to Command.
1st April, 1908, to	Major J. F. Keen ..	11-12-08	17-3-13
3rd Aug., 1914.	Major P. G. Fry ..	18-3-13	3-8-14

**I /2ND WESSEX FIELD CO. R.E.**

4th Aug., 1914, to	Major P. G. Fry ..	..	4-8-14
15th Feb., 1920.			

**2 /2ND WESSEX FIELD CO. R.E.\***

Major R. F. Lockett ..	..	..	1-10-14
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**3 /2ND WESSEX FIELD CO. R.E.\***

Major R. F. Lockett ..	..	..	
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Capt. H. R. Armstrong ..	..	..	
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**2ND BATT. WESSEX DIVL. ENGINEERS.**

Post-war.	Lt.-Col. P. G. Fry, C.M.G., D.S.O., T.D. ..	..	Feb., 1920 Oct., 1921†
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**3RD WESSEX FIELD COMPANY ROYAL ENGINEERS.**

**I /3RD WESSEX FIELD CO. R.E.**

Period.	Rank and Name.	Appointed.	Ceased to Command.
4th Aug., 1914, to	Capt. J. W. Garton ..	..	12-11-14
15th Feb., 1920.	Major W. Jane ..	..	31-12-14

**2 /3RD WESSEX FIELD CO. R.E.**

Major J. W. Garton ..	..	..	31-12-14
Capt. N. C. Harbutt ..	..	..	

**3 /3RD WESSEX FIELD CO. R.E.**

Lieut. F. G. Halliday ..	..	..	18/5/15
Major J. W. Garton ..	..	..	

Early in 1917 all R.E. (T.) officers were placed on one list.

**223RD R.F.A. BRIGADE SIGNAL SECTION ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS.**

Period.	Rank and Name.	Appointed.	Ceased to Command
Post-war.	Lieut. W. Edwards ..	..	Mar., 1921

\* Senior officers in their line.

† At this time the Divisional Engineers became the unit. The designation of the 2nd Batt. Wessex Divl. Engineers was changed to "No. 2 Double Field Co. Wessex R.E." in December, 1920.

## 4TH BATT. SOMERSET LIGHT INFANTRY.

Period.	Rank and Name.	Appointed.	Ceased to Command.
1st April, 1908, to	Lt.-Col. and Hon. Col. H. F. Clutterbuck, V.D.	1-4-08 ..	31-12-09
3rd Aug., 1914.	Lt.-Col. G. S. Pollard, V.D.	1-1-10	6-1-12
	Lt.-Col. W. C. Cox, Major ret. pay (Res. of Off.)	..	7-1-12
			3-8-14

## 1 /4TH BATTALION.

4th Aug., 1914, to	Lt.-Col. W. C. Cox	..	4-8-14	Mar., 1918
15th Feb., 1920	Lt.-Col. L. H. Stone (Major, Som. L.I.)	..	..	Mar., 1918 May, 1919

## 2 /4TH BATTALION.

Lt.-Col. and Hon. Col. H. F. Clutterbuck, V.D. (Lt.- Col. & Hon. Col. ret. T.F.)	30-9-14	12-10-15
Major J. M. E. Waddy (Lt.- Col. ret. pay)	13-10-15	13-4-16
Major L. K. Bunting, T.D.	14-4-16	17-7-16
Lt.-Col. H. F. Clutterbuck	18-7-16	20-11-17
Lt.-Col. E. B. Powell, D.S.O. (Rifle Brigade)	12-12-17	17
Major L. K. Bunting	17	18
Lt.-Col. E. B. Powell, D.S.O.	Jan., 1918	Sept., 1918
Lt.-Col. A. W. Reid, R.E.	Sept., 1918	Mar., 1919

## 3 /4TH BATTALION.

Lt.-Col. H. W. L. H. Heathcoat- Amory, late Capt. C. Gds.	5-4-16	1916
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## 4TH (RESERVE) BATTALION.

Lt.-Col. H. W. L. H. Heathcoat- Amory	..	..	16	12-11-17
Lt.-Col. D. W. C. Davies- Evans, Major, Pemb. Yeo.	13-11-17	Mar., 1918		
Lt.-Col. E. Roche-Kelly, D.S.O., R. Irish Regt.	..	Mar., 1918	Nov., 1918	
Lt.-Col. The Hon. E. Strachey	12-3-1920	17-4-22		
Lt.-Col. C. H. Little, D.S.O. (Bt.-Lt.-Col. Som. L.I.)	..	18-4-22		18-9-23
Lt.-Col. G. Flemming, O.B.E., M.C.	..	..	19-9-23	

Post-war.

## APPENDIX I.

## 5TH BATTALION THE SOMERSET LIGHT INFANTRY.

Period.	Rank and Name.	Appointed.	Ceased to Command.
1st April, 1908, to 3rd Aug., 1914.	Lt.-Col. & Hon. Col. W. Marsh, V.D. .. .. ..	1-4-08	18-9-09
	Lt.-Col. & Hon. Col. E. Trevor, V.D. .. .. ..	19-9-09	18-7-10
	Lt.-Col. J. W. Gifford, V.D. ..	19-7-10	3-1-13
	Lt.-Col. E. F. Cooke-Hurle (Major, ret. pay, Res. of Off.) .. .. ..	4-1-13	3-8-14

## 1/5TH BATTALION.

4th Aug., 1914, to 15th Feb., 1920.	Lt.-Col. E. F. Cooke-Hurle, D.S.O. .. .. ..	4-8-14	Feb., 1919
	Lt.-Col. F. D. Urwick, D.S.O. ..	Feb., 1919	Mar., 1920

## 2/5TH BATTALION.

Lt.-Col. J. R. Paull, O.B.E., T.D. .. .. ..	3-10-14	25-2-20
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## 3/5TH BATTALION.

Post-war.	Major H. W. L. H. Heathcoat- Amory, late Capt. C. Gds.	4-2-15	4-4-16
	Lt.-Col. D. S. Watson, D.S.O., T.D. .. .. ..	16-2-20	28-8-23
	Lt.-Col. R. E. Gifford, T.D. ..	29-8-23	

2ND SOUTH-WESTERN MOUNTED BRIGADE T. AND S. COLUMN,  
R.A.S.C.

Period.	Rank and Name.	Appointed.	Ceased to Command.
1st April, 1908, to 3rd Aug., 1914.	Capt. M. Boyle .. .. ..	3-10-08	3-8-14
	.. .. ..	1915	31-8-16*

## 1/2ND SOUTH-WESTERN MTD. BDE., T. AND S. COL.

4th Aug., 1914, to	Capt. M. Boyle .. .. ..	4-8-14	1915
	.. .. ..	1915	31-8-16*

## 2/2ND SOUTH-WESTERN MTD. BDE., T. AND S. COL.

Capt. F. R. Elmes .. .. ..	16-1-15	31-8-16*
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## 3/2ND SOUTH-WESTERN MTD. BDE., T. AND S. COL.

Lt. D. Goodman .. .. ..	1915	31-8-16*
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\* Territorial A.S.C. officers were transferred to Regular Army on 1/9/16.

**SOUTH WESSEX INFANTRY BRIGADE COMPANY, R.A.S.C.**

Period.	Rank and Name.	Appointed.	Ceased to Command.
1st April, 1908, to 3rd Aug., 1914.	Major A. H. Peace, T.D.	.. 1-4-08	3-8-14

**1 / 1ST SOUTH-WESTERN INFY. BDE. CO., R.A.S.C.**

4th Aug., 1914, to 31st Aug., 1916.	Major A. H. Peace	.. ..	4-8-14
	Major H. Gregory	.. ..	

**2 / 1ST SOUTH-WESTERN INFY. BDE. CO., R.A.S.C.**

Capt. F. J. Boyle	.. ..	28-II-14
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**2ND SOUTH-WESTERN MOUNTED BRIGADE FIELD AMBULANCE,  
ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS.**

Period.	Rank and Name.	Appointed.	Ceased to Command.
1st April, 1908, to 3rd Aug., 1914.	Lt.-Col. A. W. Dalby	.. 1-4-08	6-8-12
	Lt.-Col. A. Cary	.. 7-8-12	3-8-14

**1 / 2ND SOUTH-WESTERN MTD. BDE. FD. AMB., R.A.M.C.**

5th Aug., 1914, to Major R. Waterhouse	Lt.-Col. A. Cary	.. ..	4-8-14 Aug., 1915
	Lt.-Col. A. Cary	.. ..	Aug., 1915 July, 1916
	Major R. Waterhouse	.. ..	July, 1916 Jan., 1917
	Major R. Waterhouse	.. ..	For a few days.*

**2 / 2ND SOUTH-WESTERN MTD. BDE. FD. AMB., R.A.M.C.**

Lt.-Col. J. R. Benson	.. ..	30-I-15
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**3 / 2ND SOUTH-WESTERN MTD. BDE. FD. AMB., R.A.M.C.**

Major H. N. Barnett	.. ..	5-I-15
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\* It was about this time that the Field Ambulance was amalgamated with the Welsh Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance to form the 231st Field Ambulance.

## APPENDIX II.

## APPENDIX II.

LIST OF UNITS ADMINISTERED BY THE SOMERSET TERRITORIAL ARMY ASSOCIATION, SHOWING  
ESTABLISHMENTS AND STATIONS, JULY 6TH, 1923.

Full Title.	Establishment. Officers. Other Ranks. Headquarters.	Stations, Squadrons, Companies.	Out-stations.
The North Somerset Yeomanry ..	.. 22 274 Bath .. ..	" A " Bath " B " Bristol " C " Shepton Mallet ..	—
Headquarters, 94th (Dorset and Somerset Yeomanry) Brigade Royal Field Artillery	2 14 Taunton .. ..	—	—
373rd (West Somerset Yeomanry) Battery Royal Field Artillery .. ..	5 101 Taunton	—	—
374th (West Somerset Yeomanry) Battery Royal Field Artillery .. ..	5 101 Glastonbury	—	—
43rd (The Wesssex) Divisional Engineers, Royal Engineers .. ..	14 471 Bath .. ..	204th (Wessex) Field Co., Bath .. ..	Frome
		205th (Wessex) Field Co., Weston-super-Mare ..	Clevedon
		207th (Wessex) Field Park Co., Bath .. ..	Frome

223rd Royal Field Artillery Brigade Signal Section, Royal Corps of Signals ..	1	21	Taunton	..	..	—	—
4th Battalion The Somerset Light Infantry (Prince Albert's) .. .. ..	21	637	Bath	..	..	“A” Bath .. .. ..	—
						“B” Bath .. .. ..	Keynsham
						“C” Weston-super-Mare .. .. ..	Cheddar
							Winscombe
							Yatton ..
							Froome ..
							Shepton Mallet ..
5th Battalion The Somerset Light Infantry (Prince Albert's) .. .. ..	21	637	Taunton	..	..	Machine Gun Platoon, Crewkerne .. .. ..	—
						No. 1, Taunton .. .. ..	Wellingron
						No. 2, Yeovil .. .. ..	—
						No. 3, Bridgwater .. .. ..	—
						No. 4, Chard .. .. ..	Ilminster
43rd (The Wesssex) Divisional Mobile Veterinary Section, Royal Army Veterinary Corps (including Divisional R.A.V.C. Headquarters and “Attached to units”) .. .. .. ..	11	15	Minehead (Divl. R.A.V.C. H.Q. at Bideford)	—	—	—	—
Headquarters, 129th (South Wesssex) Infantry Brigade .. .. .. ..	—	—	—	1	Bath .. .. ..	—	—
	102	2272					

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